

A SLIGHT MISTAKE.

BY ELIZABETH BIGELOW.

MISS DORA CASWELL and her school-friend and affinity, Miss Bella Dayton, were trifling over a late breakfast, in a cosy little breakfast-room with crimson curtains, a canary bird piping a merry tune in his cage in the window, and a flood of May sunshine streaming in. Both the young ladies had been out late the night before, and looked slightly weary-eyed and pale, neither being as yet quite accustomed to fashionable dissipation. Dora, with her fair face, and pale golden hair gathered back into a great, careless twist, looked like a lily, Bella rather like a drooping red rose.

"Look, Dora," said Bella, suddenly, "there are two letters for you. The postman has been here already. You pushed your plate over them when you sat down, so that you didn't see them."

Dora moved her plate, and took the letters up languidly. Her eye brightened a little as it fell on the superscription of one of them.

"Shelby!" she said, "but how soon he writes! I haven't answered his other letter yet."

She opened it and ran it over hastily.

"He writes to tell me that the friend who has been travelling with him, and who took such care of him when he was ill, is coming to P——. Hear what he says: 'Fred is a splendid fellow, and I am sure you'll like him, and I hope Uncle John will show him every possible attention, and you, Dora, be sure to look your prettiest, for I have told him what a charming young woman my little sister is, and I don't want him to be disappointed.'

"The foolish boy!" said Dora, growing rosy, but looking as if she were a little pleased, nevertheless. "'Fred' he calls him—I wonder what his last name is. Well, we shall see him very soon, I suppose. The letter is dated May 3d, and it is the 17th to-day."

"I hope he is nice," said Bella, reflectively.

"Of course he is if he is Shelby's friend," answered Dora, a little indignantly.

Shelby was Miss Dora's only brother, and was evidently her idol, as was quite natural he should be, being the only relative she had in the world save the uncle with whom she lived, who was also her guardian, and his son, a scapegrace of a college youth.

"It's from Harry, I believe," she said, "but what in the world can he be writing to me for?" She opened it and read, breaking into a merry laugh as she finished. "Poor Harry!" she said. "He is in trouble, again, about money. Just listen:

"DEAR COUSIN DORA:—I'm the most unlucky fellow alive! I've got into an awful fix, again, for want of money! Every cent of my last quarter's allowance had to go to pay my share of the club expenses, and I haven't seen a bank bill for so long that I've forgotten how they look. I thought I'd try to keep the duns quiet, and worry along till next quarter (for the governor is so furious about my extravagance that I don't dare to ask him for extra money), when up comes that little sneak of a tailor, Armitage, with his 'little bill,' and threatens to call on the governor unless it's paid at once. Now, you see, the gov. gave me extra money six months ago, to pay that very bill, but as I had another pressing use for the money (now don't shake your head and look solemn, Dora—what can a fellow do?) I didn't pay it. So, you see, I had to stop his going to the governor, and I couldn't put him off until next quarter, so I told him to carry the bill to you, and you would pay it. Now do take pity on me and pay it, and I will pay you just as soon as I can possibly get the money. If you were a man I should ask you to kick him out of the house after you have paid him—the miserable scoundrel has dunned me almost to death. He keeps a wretched little shop, and I should never have thought of trading with him if I hadn't supposed he'd wait as long as I wanted him for his pay, and the down town tailors wouldn't. But he follows me about continually; I can't turn a corner without meeting him, and I'm worn almost to a shadow with the worry and torment. Now, Dora, just do this for me (pay the tailor, not kick him), and don't write me a letter on extravagance, and I will be, always, your grateful and affectionate cousin,
HARRY."

"P. S. If you don't pay it I shall shoot myself at once. Armitage is going to P—— tomorrow, and will probably call on you very soon. The bill is \$112."

"Poor boy!" said Dora. "I am afraid it is encouraging him in extravagance for me to pay it, for I know Uncle John gives him as much money as he ought to spend, but I can't help it, I pity him so; he is so generous and thoughtless he can't help spending a great deal of money."

Just at that moment a ring of the door bell echoed through the house, and a moment after, a servant brought a card to Dora.

"'J. F. Armitage.' That's the tailor! And, bless me, what a dainty card! Well, he shall have his money, and then I hope he'll let poor Harry have a little peace. How mean of him not to wait a few months when Harry was so pressed for money!"

"Perhaps he is poor, and needs it," suggested Bella. But Dora was too much excited about poor Harry's wrongs and misfortunes to heed her. She tripped up stairs, took a roll of crisp bank notes from her purse, not without one little sigh at the thought of the lovely, new, sea-green silk, just the shade that was most becoming to her complexion, which she had intended to purchase with that money, and which she must now resign—for Uncle John was a strict guardian, as well as father, and Dora's allowance wasn't over-ample—and then tripped down again to the drawing-room where Mr. Armitage awaited her. The sparkle of anger which the thought of the tailor's "meanness" had brought to her eyes was still there, and she said, very haughtily and peremptorily, as he rose to meet her:

"Here is your money, sir. It is just the amount of my cousin's bill, I believe."

Mr. Armitage looked at the bills which she forced into his hand, in a puzzled and confused way.

"But—but—" he stammered.

"You will find that the amount is quite right," said Dora, interrupting him, "and you will please return the receipted bill to my cousin. Good-morning, sir. John show this man to the door," and Miss Dora swept away, highly satisfied with her business-like air, and with the dignity and hauteur with which she had annihilated Harry's "little sneak of a tailor."

But the individual whom she had annihilated had the air of being rather puzzled and amused than angry as he walked leisurely down the street.

"Refreshingly cool, certainly!" he said to himself. "What in the name of common sense can she have meant? I can't have

blundered into a lunatic asylum, can I? No; there was Caswell on the door, certainly. And that was Shelby's sister, certainly—eyes and hair exactly like his. She must have taken me for somebody else, and she's evidently a very high-spirited young lady. Pretty, too—a perfect peach and cream complexion, and a nice little figure. What shall I do with the money? I ought to have put it down on the table, or somewhere, as I came out, but, really, I was so taken aback by my singular reception that I hadn't my wits about me. Mr. Caswell, the uncle, is out of town, they tell me, so I shall have to send it to her in an envelop."

Accordingly the next morning Dora received an envelop containing just the sum, and, she thought, but as she was very careless about such things she couldn't be certain, the very bills which she had given the tailor the day before.

"Probably your cousin got the money in some way and sent it to you," said Bella.

"Probably," said Dora, rather doubtfully, "but it isn't his writing on the envelop; and why didn't he write and explain? And it is very strange that the bills should be so much like those I gave the tailor yesterday."

"O, perhaps he was in a hurry, and didn't have time to write, and got somebody else to direct the envelop for him. And as for the bills, that is nothing; you are not sure that they are exactly alike."

And, so, accepting that as the explanation of the matter, Dora went, that very afternoon, and bought the sea-green silk, with a glad heart. Coming out of the store she caught Bella's arm suddenly and whispered:

"There is the tailor!"

Bella looked, and saw a very handsome young man, with dark eyes and hair, standing on the sidewalk and regarding Dora very earnestly.

"Why, he is nice looking, isn't he?" she said. "But just see him look at you. He seems as if he were going to stop and speak!"

Dora's face flushed with anger.

"Was there ever such impertinence?" she said.

And all the way home she could not get the impertinent tailor out of her mind; those grave, dark eyes followed her in a strange, persistent way long after their owner had disappeared. And scarcely had they reached home when the door bell rang, and a servant shortly appeared saying that a Mr. Armitage wished to see Miss Dora.

"That tailor again! Bella, what do you suppose he can want, now? He really must be insane!" exclaimed Dora. "Tell Mr. Armitage that I am engaged, and that I don't wish to be troubled with him any further," she said, to the servant.

"But I don't know, after all, but that I ought to have gone down," she said, after the servant had gone. "There may possibly be some mistake—he acted so strangely."

"O no, dear," said Bella, laughing. "The poor fellow was probably so bewildered by your lovely face that he couldn't think what to say, and now he has come for another glimpse of it."

"Please don't jest about it, Bella," said Miss Dora, with dignity. "I can't think what possible excuse he could have made for coming here again, and when I think how impertinent he was this afternoon, I'm glad I didn't go down."

But, if Miss Dora could have seen the little, stout, elderly man, with gray hair and whiskers, and a rubicund visage, who was at that moment going down the steps, muttering wrathfully to himself, she might not have been so glad that she didn't go down.

"Don't want any more trouble with me, do they?" said the little old man to himself, shaking his cane as furiously in the air as if every stroke were to fall upon his face. "O, if that fine young master, Harry Caswell, don't find himself in hot water before he's many days older, my name's not Jacob Armitage!"

In the two weeks that followed, the two young ladies in their walks and drives about town, encountered continually, by a strange chance, the dark-eyed young man, known to them as Mr. Armitage the tailor.

"I really think you have made a conquest of the tailor, Dora," said merry Bella. "Such constant meetings cannot be wholly accidental. And what can he be staying here so long for? He doesn't seem to have any business to attend to; I should think his trade in H—— would suffer from his absence; I don't think he can have any assistant in that little shop of his—I remember noticing it when I have been in H—— at the college commencements, when brother Phil was there—a little bit of a store, with 'Jacob F. Armitage, Tailor,' in blue and gilt letters over the door."

"How strange that he should be so handsome, so really distinguished-looking, isn't it?" said Dora, musingly.

"Very strange, indeed. My dear Dora, you must be careful not to let the admiration, so earnest yet so respectful, which shows itself in those dark eyes kindle a reciprocal emotion in your own bosom," said Bella, with mock gravity.

"Don't be so absurd, Bella," said Dora, pettishly, yet—shall I confess it?—with visibly heightened color. "I wish he would return to his shop. It is very annoying to meet him so constantly."

"O well, we are going out of town next week, you know, and shall probably never see him again."

"I am sorry to go away without seeing Shelby's friend," said Dora, after a moment's silence; "but I suppose he concluded to wait and come with Shelby. He is coming in September, Uncle John wrote me; he has had a letter from him very lately. Then they will probably join us at C——."

C—— was a fashionable watering-place, which, even as early as the month of June, when Dora and Bella found themselves there, under the chaperonage of an aunt of Bella's, was thronged with guests; and in the continual round of gayety Dora very soon forgot the annoying tailor. Only for a week or two, however, did that individual allow himself to be forgotten! Dora was in her room, dressing for a ride one afternoon, when Bella, who had been watching the arrivals from the crowded coach, rushed in, with a face expressive of both mirth and dismay, exclaiming:

"Dora, Dora, your fate has followed you! The tailor has come!"

"Bella, you are not in earnest? You don't mean that that man is really here!" said Dora, earnestly.

"He certainly is here, came in the last coach, and is now smoking a cigar on the piazza in the most nonchalant manner. And if his coming here was accidental, fate certainly has something to do with it, Dora!"

But it was not accident, but a deep-laid scheme, that had brought Mr. Armitage to C——, as Dora would have known if she had been able to look into the library of her uncle's house on an afternoon a little more than a week after she left it. The group assembled there consisted of Mr. Shelby Caswell, unexpectedly arrived from Europe on that day, his friend, Mr. James Frederick Armitage, and his cousin, Master Harry Caswell, at home on his annual vacation. Mr. Armitage had given his friend an account of his reception from Dora, and Master Harry was

giving the explanation of the same which had just struck him.

"By Jove!" he said, "I'll tell you how it was. I asked Dora to pay my tailor's bill—told her that the tailor, Armitage, would call for the money, and your name being Armitage, too, she mistook you for him! And a pretty scrape it got me into, and I blamed Dora for it! Old Armitage said my cousin refused to see him, and he went to the governor in a towering fury with the bill. He must have called after you did."

"And you returned the money to her, you say, Fred?" said Shelby. "Whom could she have thought it came from?"

"I don't see through that," said Harry. "Though she might possibly have thought I sent it to her."

"Well, my dear fellow," said Shelby, "we'll visit C—at once, and Dora shall beg your pardon."

Mr. Armitage was reflecting, silently.

"Shelby," he said, suddenly, "I have a little scheme in my head, which I want you to help me carry out. I want to see if it is not possible for me to make your sister's acquaintance, allowing her to think me, as she does now, a tailor." Shelby's face expressed the greatest astonishment.

"But, why—" he began.

"It's only a whim of mine," said Mr. Armitage, interrupting him. "All I ask of you is to allow me to go to C—alone, or, if you go, too, not to betray me—not to show in any way that you have the slightest acquaintance with me. And all I ask of your cousin is that he will be kind enough not to undeceive Miss Dora about the payment of the bill, but allow her to think that the money which I returned to her came from him."

"By jolly! It'll be a good joke!" exclaimed Master Harry. "I shall be delighted to help you! I'll write to her, and tell her how much I am indebted to her for her kindness in paying the tailor, instead of blowing her up for not paying him as I intended to. And I'll tell her the governor sent me some money—no I won't, though; she'll know that's a lie—I'll tell her I got some money unexpectedly, and thought I'd send it to her at once."

So the matter was arranged, with only a faint remonstrance from Shelby; and two days later Mr. Armitage made his appearance at C—, as we have seen. When Dora went across the piazza, in her riding-habit, that afternoon, there he sat, with a cigar in his mouth, surveying the landscape with a most

serenely, self-complacent air. When she returned from her ride he was there still, but he did not once glance toward her, until, just as she was passing him, her handkerchief fell from her hand at his feet; he picked it up with a very grave and courtly bow. The most provoking mischance, thought Dora, that it should happen to fall just there!

For a week she saw but little of the tailor; once or twice at the table, and in passing through the hall, she felt, rather than saw, his eyes fixed upon her, but they were always instantly withdrawn when she looked up. But Dora had begun to feel an unaccountable interest in the tailor, and thought of him so often that she felt humiliated and angry with herself.

But Mr. Armitage was not well satisfied; for no sign of success had as yet attended his plans. He had imagined a thousand ways by which he was to ingratiate himself into Dora's favor; he had pictured himself in all sorts of heroic attitudes; plunging into the river to rescue her from drowning, bearing her off unharmed, at the risk of his own life, from the flames of a burning building—the hotel being conveniently set on fire for the occasion—and performing a dozen other feats by which he should incur her everlasting gratitude, and thus open the way for an acquaintance, which under those circumstances she could not refuse, even if he were a tailor. But, for a time, Fortune did not seem to favor him, and he was growing discouraged, when the fickle goddess, suddenly as is her wont, came to his aid.

Dora had wandered off alone, one afternoon, in search of flowers, and walking on, thoughtless of how far she was going, was aroused suddenly from her revery to find herself more than a mile from the hotel, and a thunder shower coming on. Already the rain had begun to fall, and Dora began to look anxiously about for a place of shelter, when she heard the quick clatter of horse's hoofs coming along the road, and in another moment a light; covered carriage had stopped beside her, and from it sprang the tailor! There was no time for ceremonious speech-making, or even for thought, with the rain pouring in torrents and the lightning flashing its fiery shafts in their faces. Dora had a dim consciousness of an invitation, given in very courteous and respectful tones, and the moment she was in the carriage speeding away toward the hotel.

Blessing the chance that had brought about the meeting, Mr. Armitage devoted himself,

with all the tact and skill which he could command, to the task of making a favorable impression upon his companion, and in spite of herself, little by little, Dora's reserve and hauteur wore away; he was so brilliant and entertaining, and he showed, withal, so much refinement and culture, that Dora found herself pleased and admiring, and her wonder increased with every moment, until before they reached the hotel she had become positive that there was some mistake.

Bella, who had been watching anxiously for Dora, and had seen her return, came toward her as she entered the room, with uplifted hands, and amazement and mirth mingled in the expression of her face.

"Dora, where did you find the tailor?" she exclaimed.

"He found me beside the wood, just as the shower came on, and I'm sure I don't know what would have become of me if he hadn't. And he is so gentlemanly and agreeable, Bella, I'm perfectly sure he isn't a tailor!" Bella looked very much mystified, and a little amused.

"Well, a letter came for you while you were gone, and I think in your cousin Harry's writing. If there is a mistake probably that will explain it."

Dora took the letter and opened it eagerly. This was what she read:

"DEAR DORA:—You're just the nicest cousin that ever a fellow had! I don't know how to thank you for getting me out of that scrape. It worried me dreadfully I was so afraid the governor would hear of it, and I assure you I feel like a different person with Armitage's receipted bill in my pocket. I hope you received the money I sent you, which I was lucky enough to get from an unexpected quarter. By the way, that Armitage is a queer fellow; he's gone kiting off to some watering-place this summer—to C—, I believe, so perhaps you've seen him. He's good looking—don't you think so?—looks like a gentleman, and when he goes away he 'leaves the shop behind him,' and cuts quite a dash, they say. Well, I don't blame him for taking a little vacation, for he works hard enough; he sews like lightning—did you ever see a man sew?—and you ought to see how he makes his goose fly! As ever your affectionate cousin,
HARRY."

Dora folded the letter up and put it into her pocket.

"There isn't any mistake, Bella," she said.

"He is the tailor. How very strange that he should have chosen such an occupation!"

"Very strange and sad," said Bella, laughing at Dora's regretful tone.

"If Jacob were all that he seemed—
And his smile were all—"

"Bella, I do wish you wouldn't be quite so ridiculous!" said Dora. Just at that moment Mrs. Wingate, Bella's aunt, entered the room.

"Dora dear," she said, "who was that very handsome and distinguished-looking young gentleman with whom you rode home? I have noticed him several times. He has that unmistakable air of high birth and breeding which is so uncommon."

Bella stifled a laugh in her pocket-handkerchief, and looked intently out of the window. Mrs. Wingate was a lady who prided herself upon her skill and quickness in detecting false pretensions to aristocracy, and was filled with the greatest contempt for "upstarts" and "snobs."

"His name is Armitage," answered Dora, faintly. "He lives in H—."

"Ah! You were acquainted with him before you came here, I suppose?" said Mrs. Wingate.

"I had seen him before," said Dora, hesitatingly. And after a few more remarks, Mrs. Wingate sailed away.

"Wouldn't it have been fun to tell her he was a tailor? Why didn't you?" asked Bella, after she had gone.

"Why, I don't know," answered Dora. "I knew that she would be so shocked at my riding with him, that I didn't like to."

So Fortune had made one more move in Mr. Armitage's favor, by gaining for him Mrs. Wingate as an ally; and a very powerful ally she proved to be. She insisted upon Dora's introducing Mr. Armitage to her at once, and, finding him even more agreeable than she had anticipated, she was overwhelmingly gracious and cordial to him, and he fell gradually into the position of an acknowledged and familiar friend of the party. Even Dora found it impossible to maintain the coldness and reserve which she attempted, and Bella, finding him a pleasant companion for the time, and enjoying the prospect of triumphing over her aunt by proving to her, at some future time, that she had once been deceived by "that unmistakable air of high birth and breeding," was rather delighted than otherwise at the turn which affairs had taken; and so, long before the summer had

passed, both the young ladies had ceased to think or speak of him as the tailor, except now and then to wonder and conjecture what could have led him to select such an occupation.

But Dora was beginning to be very slow to speak of Mr. Armitage in any way, which was very singular, Bella thought, until a faint suspicion began to dawn upon her mind, which was strengthened one day by a remark of Mrs. Wingate's.

"Bella," she said, "do you know I think Mr. Armitage is in love with Dora? and I am by no means sure that she does not return it. I hope it is so, for I like him very much, and I am sure, though we know so little about him, that he is perfectly unexceptionable."

Bella grew pale with dismay. Could it be possible that Dora was in love with the tailor? And would she think of marrying him? Would he presume to ask her to marry him?

And Bella was not the only one who debated in her mind these questions. Poor little Dora was in a sad quandary. Vexed, and struggling constantly with herself, she could not help acknowledging that, in her secret heart, she thought more of, and cared more for, the tailor than—than for anybody else in the world! But she must not, she would not, be so foolish as to give way to such a feeling; she must never let him speak any words of love to her!

But, alas for Dora's resolution! out on the moonlit piazza, alone with Mr. Armitage, one night, before she had the slightest idea of what was coming, she found herself listening to a tender and passionate avowal of love. And when she would have repulsed him, her lips trembled so that she could not speak, and she stood, for a moment, flushing, and paling, and silent.

"You should never have spoken those words to me, Mr. Armitage," she said, faintly, at last. "It can never, never be!"

"Because you can never love me?"

"No—no, perhaps not that," faltered Dora. "But—but your profession, your occupation is so—so objectionable."

It was well that Mr. Armitage turned his eyes away from Dora's at that moment, or the sparkle of mirth in them might have awakened a suspicion in her mind. But the next moment he was as grave as before.

"My occupation," he said, "is one which my father and my grandfather followed before me, and I have always considered it an honorable one; but I know that a prejudice

exists against it, and that, in the circle in which you move, a tailor is not considered a gentleman. But I have always had a hope—perhaps dream would be the fitter word—that one day I should find one who would love me for myself; who would be content to accept even poverty and an humble station for my sake. I fancied that I had found that one, and my love blinded me, perhaps, to the great difference in our stations. O Miss Caswell—Dora—if you could only forget that difference, if you would give yourself to me, no woman was ever loved and cherished as I would love and cherish you! No rude winds should ever blow upon you, no care or sorrow that human power could arrest should ever reach you!"

The words were very low and tenderly spoken, and thrilled to Dora's very heart. Her impulse was to rush away from him to the very ends of the earth; if she stayed a moment longer, she felt that she should yield.

"I cannot tell to-night—let me have time to think," she murmured.

"But don't keep me in suspense any longer than you can help," he said, earnestly.

"In a day or two—in a few days, I will tell you." And Dora sprang away from him and ran up to her own room, where Bella was awaiting her. She rushed in without a word, and throwing herself on the bed, began to sob hysterically. Bella was at her side in an instant with ready sympathy.

"What is the matter, Dora?" she said.

"O, I can't tell you!" sobbed Dora. Bella was not without a suspicion of the truth, but she wisely held her peace. There was silence for the space of two or three minutes, and then Dora suddenly raised her head.

"I must tell you, Bella; I want somebody to advise me," she said.

"I am waiting, dear," said Bella, gently. Then there was another interval of silence, broken only by Dora's sobs.

"Bella," said she, at last, "if a person who was very much below you in station—in a very humble station indeed—loved you very much, and—and you loved him, what would you do?"

"I should marry him, I think," answered Bella, promptly. "But you needn't talk in that way, dear. I know, of course, that you mean Mr. Armitage—and a tailor isn't so very bad. Just think, there have been great men—"

"But what would Uncle John say? and O, what would Shelby say? If he were only a

merchant-tailor, and kept a large store, it wouldn't be so bad; but, O Bella, he sews himself, and works with a goo—goose!"

Bella's round, black eyes grew rounder and blacker.

"A *what*?" she said.

"A goose," repeated Dora, with slight asperity in her tone. "Don't you know what that is? It is something that tailors use."

This was a little too much for Bella's gravity; she turned her head away to conceal the smile which she could not prevent, but Dora saw the motion and rose quickly, smoothing out her rumpled dress with an air of dignity. "I think you are unkind to laugh, Bella," she said, "though I know I am behaving in a very childish and ridiculous way."

Of course Bella was filled with instant contrition, and atoned for her fault by giving all the sympathizing counsel in her power to poor Dora, who wiped away her tears at length, and began to feel a little comforted.

In the meantime, in his own room, Mr. Armitage was perusing, with a very vexed face, a letter which he had just received. It was from Mr. Shelby Caswell, who requested his immediate presence at the summer resort among the mountains where he was staying, as he wished to see him on an urgent matter of business.

"If you haven't finished your masquerading yet," the letter said, "and are afraid Dora will think it strange that you should leave C— to go to another summer resort, you can let her think that you have gone back to 'your shop' in H—; and if you have got on far enough to propose a correspondence, as I should judge by your last letter you had, you can ask her to direct your letters to H—, and Harry will send them to you."

It was very annoying to be obliged to go away just at this time; but the business affair was very important, and if he didn't go Shelby might appear at C— and ruin everything. Accordingly, a few moments after, a waiter brought a note to Dora, and in another half hour Mr. Armitage was in the cars whirling away from C—.

His note to Dora was a very affecting one, judging, as Bella did, from Dora's appearance while reading it, closing with the information that he should be obliged to be away two weeks, and begging that she would not keep him in suspense that length of time, but would write to him and tell him her decision; three little words that he could think of

would be sufficient, he said; for he knew that, if she loved him, she would not let her pride stand between them forever.

After a week of doubt and indecision, Dora finally came to a conclusion, and Bella saw on her table one morning a dainty little envelop directed to Mr. Jacob F. Armitage.

"You see I am going to begin at once to try to get used to the name," she said, smiling faintly. "O if it were anything but Jacob!"

Master Harry Caswell had received instructions to go every day to the post-office, as soon as the mail came in, and inquire for letters for Mr. J. F. Armitage, lest the letter should fall into the hands of the other Mr. J. F. Armitage; but every day, even on the day when Dora had sent her letter, he went away empty-handed.

For, woful to relate, that delicate little epistle, in its perfumed, rustling, French envelop, which Dora, impelled by that mysterious evil genius who takes delight in ruffling the course of true love, had directed to *Jacob* Armitage, found its way into the dingy little receptacle for letters which graced the shop door of the *bona fide* tailor, the little, gray-headed old man who had threatened such dire vengeance against Harry Caswell when he received Dora's message that she wished to be troubled no more by him.

The little tailor's correspondence was not very extensive, and he turned Dora's letter over and over, with a puzzled look on his face, as he took it from the box. Then he carried it up stairs to the little room over the shop where his wife sat.

"Look a here, Clarindy," he said; "I've got a letter!"

"Bless us! who is it from?" exclaimed Mrs. "Clarindy."

The little man opened it slowly, as if impressed with a profound sense of the weighty responsibility of the undertaking.

"Read it out, man, an' let's hear it!" said his wife, impatiently.

He began to spell it out slowly and laboriously:

"DEAR MR. ARMITAGE,—I am willing—to accept poverty—and an humble—station for your sake. I will not—let my pride—separate us forever—though, even now—I cannot help—wishing that you had—chosen some—other profession—than that of a tailor." The little man's eyes opened very wide, and he looked into his wife's face with a comical look of surprise and consternation. "Pride and

prejudice—have been conquered—by a feeling—deeper than themselves—and I am willing—if it will make any amends to you—for the scornful—and unkind—way in which I've often—treated you—to say those—three words—which you asked me to—I love you.

“DORA CASWELL.”

The climax was too much for the little tailor; it added the last feather's weight to his astonishment, which overcame him utterly. He sank down into a chair, and wiped his little bald head with his handkerchief.

“Bless my soul!” he ejaculated, at last; “Dora Caswell! That's Harry Caswell's cousin—the young woman that was to pay my bill, and sent word how she didn't want no more trouble with me!”

Mrs. Clariudy's face was a study for a painter; amazement and wrath mingled in its expression.

“The impudent hussy! Loves you indeed, does she? Yes sir, that comes of your gallivantin' off alone to the city! Let me see her—let her tell me that she loves you!” And she shook her fist in the air, her eyes fairly blazing with anger.

“La, now, Clariudy, don't take on so!” said the tailor. “I never laid eyes on her, to my knowledge; but she's most likely seen me somewhere. If I were a young man, as I was once, it wouldn't be surprisin'; but—”

His wife was too much excited to hear anything that he said.

“Now, Jacob Armitage,” she said, interrupting him, “I am agoin' to answer that letter myself. I'll give her a piece of my mind! Accep' a' humble station, will she? An' you a' tryin' to palm yourself off for a widdener, as I make no doubt you did—”

“I tell ye I never see her!” said the little tailor, excitedly. “She must 'a' seen me unbeknownst to myself, and been attracted at once by my face or my fine figger.”

But his wife's wrath was not to be diminished, and the next night Dora received a letter, written in a coarse, scrawling hand, to this effect:

“I take my pen in hand for to answer the imperdent letter that you rote my husban', an' to tell you that I am alive an' flourishin', an' you wont probable have to accep' the 'umble stashun of bein' his wife rite away. I s'pose likely he represents himself a single man when he goes gallivantin' off, leavin' his lawful wife to home, but I'd have you understan' that sich is not the case, an' you better

not rite him no more love letters, ef you don't want to hear agin an' more forcable frum

“Yours respectfully,

“CLARINDA ARMITAGE.”

“O Bella, Bella, he's married!” cried Dora, holding the letter out towards her, with quivering fingers, her face ashy white.

Bella glanced it over hastily.

“Dora, there is, there must be some strange mistake! Mr. Armitage never could have married such a woman as that!”

Dora put her hand up to her head.

“I don't know,” she said, feebly. “Things grow stranger and stranger, and I believe I am growing crazy!”

But poor Dora's grief and suspense were not destined to last long. The very next night the mail brought her a letter from Harry, and, with an instant presentiment that it contained some explanation of the mystery, she tore it open eagerly.

“Dear Dora,” he wrote, “I've been standing by and seeing you deceived, and even helping to deceive you, for a long time, but now I see that it is beginning to get you into a fix, and when I think how many fixes you've helped me out of, I haven't the heart to do it any longer. Dora, the fact is, there are two Mr. J. F. Armitages, when they've been making you believe there was only one. Mr. Jacob F. Armitage is a little old man who keeps a tailor's shop here in H—; Mr. J. Frederick Armitage, who has been at C— with you this summer, is a lawyer, and Shelby's particular friend. Shelby came home more than two months ago—I know you've received letters from him since then, which he pretended he enclosed in letters to father, and got him to direct so that you needn't think it strange that they were post-marked P—; and one day, at our house, Mr. Armitage told us about calling on you, and the queer reception you gave him, giving him money and having him shown out before he could explain. (By the way, it was he that sent you back the money, not I.) Of course I understood at once that you mistook him for the tailor, and told him so, and then he said he wanted to try to get acquainted with you, allowing you to think him a tailor. So he made Shelby and me promise not to expose him, and—well, I suppose you know the rest better than I do. He has gone to Shelburne, where Shelby is now, instead of to H—, as he let you suppose, and he wanted me to get a letter which was to come to the

post-office here, and forward it to him. As I didn't get any, I had a suspicion that it had fallen into the hands of the tailor, and went down to his shop this morning, to ask him about it, when, the moment I entered the shop, his wife began to tell me, in a great rage, about a love-letter which my cousin had written her husband! Of course I understood at once how matters stood, but I had the hardest work to convince the old woman that the letter was not intended for her husband; but she finally said 'ef there was a mistake, she hoped you'd excuse the letter she wrote you.' I tried to get the letter, but she said she had burned it. I'm very sorry that I had anything to do with this, Dora, for I think it was a very shabby trick, though I thought, at first, it would be only a good joke. I hope you'll forgive me, and believe me, as always, your affectionate cousin,

"HARRY."

Great was the excitement when the two young ladies perused this epistle. Dora was divided between indignation and delight, and it was difficult to tell which predominated.

But when, a few days later, Shelby and Mr. Armitage, learning from Harry that their plot was discovered, appeared in C—, in a rather abashed and contrite frame of mind, Miss Dora was as dignified and stately as any tragedy queen. But I am obliged to confess that her dignity and stateliness were not very long-lived, and before many days passed, Mr. Armitage had the pleasure of hearing a repetition, in very faltering accents, of a portion of the contents of that letter which had fallen a victim to the wrath of the tailor's wife; and before the next summer came, Dora wore bridal white and orange blossoms, with Bella beside her, radiant in pink tarlatan, and Mrs. Wingate in the background, serenely triumphant. And, as yet, Dora has never been sorry for the resolution that she made to sacrifice wealth and station for "love's sweet sake;" and I really think that she is sometimes sorry, in her foolish, romantic little soul, that her husband is not what she fancied him to be, that she might prove how contented and happy she could be with the "poverty" and the "humble station."

A STRANGE AFFAIR.

BY MRS. R. B. EDSON.

THE train had been due twenty minutes. Victor Delano strode impatiently up and down the narrow platform of the little signal station at Jay's Corner. It was almost six o'clock, and already the shadows were deepening in the broad belt of cedars stretching away toward Lockport, while one by one the lights flashed out from the village windows, and the lonely, wind-swept road grew suddenly gay with the laugh, and song, and jest, of the returning laborers.

The wind swept down raw and chill from the northeast, with a feeling of snow in the atmosphere. It was late in November—the dreariest month in all the year—and the short twilight merged rapidly into evening. Inside the station, weary mothers sought in vain to pacify tired and refractory children, and nervous old ladies, holding close to their carpet-bags and handboxes, were positively certain that “something had happened.” Victor Delano turned on his heel and listened—leaning over and looking down the long line of track to where a great, round, red eye of fire glowed sullenly through the dusky distance. He drew a long breath of relief, and even smiled slightly at sight of one old lady in a scoop-bonnet and pongee gown, who, in the general rush, had lost the cover off her handbox, and, to complete her misery, the impish wind had swooped down upon her “best cap,” and sent it, like a mammoth snowflake, whirling down the track.

Delano entered the warm, well-lighted car, and felt as if he had been suddenly transported to a new world. The cold, and annoyance, and vexation faded away with the little, dark, dingy station, and his habitual cheerfulness and good-humor returned. Moreover, there were an unusual number of pretty faces in that particular car, and he had a decided penchant for pretty faces. A very remarkable man, you will perceive at once! And then, he was fortunate enough to find a friend who was going through to Lockport, thus relieving the tedium of loneliness by a little pleasant gossip. And, as if fate was determined to recompense him for past discomfort, there was a dainty, wild-rose sort of a girl, and a pretty, brown-eyed boy of perhaps two years, occupying the seat directly

in front of him. And while he chatted carelessly with his friend, he watched the pretty, girlish figure, and wondered if it could be possible it was *her* child, who did not herself seem scarcely more than a child. His pleasantly-perplexing reverie was interrupted by his friend's asking, somewhat abruptly:

“What's the story, Delano, about Hal Thornton's dying of yellow fever—is it a fact?”

The girl in the seat before them gave a little start, and glanced timidly around. Our travellers had only time to observe that she had the same great brown eyes, and innocent, guileless face, that particularly characterized the child, ere she turned away her face, which, Delano fancied, wore a slight look of disappointment. There was a faint undertone of vexation or regret in his voice, as he answered his friend's question.

“Yes, poor old Hal has gone, which is bad enough, but not all of the story.”

“Then it's so—the rumor of his bankruptcy?”

“Yes, it is all too true, I fear. He died in utter poverty, and was buried at the expense of the city.”

“But his family?”

“O, haven't you heard?” something unpleasant creeping into his tone. “Then you didn't know that I was to play the role of guardian?”

“Of his wife?”

“O, his wife died a year ago. He left two children, however, a girl and boy. I don't know how old these children are—I only wish they were old enough to take care of themselves! Just think of it, Braley, my bachelor quarters turned into a nursery!”

“A result I have been anticipating for years,” was the laughing condolence.

“You may laugh, but I tell you, I don't feel particularly jolly about it. But there is no help for it. I don't mind the money—I'd gladly have helped Hal out of his difficulties, if he had only let me known—but it's the trouble and annoyance of having the care of two children saddled on me that disturbs me.”

“But he's not related to you really?”

“No; but when my father married his mother, he became nominally one of the

family, and I know if father was alive, he would take Hal's children home just as quick as though he had been his own son. And I should be ashamed to do less. Besides, *she* was a good mother to me, and, though I know I am supremely selfish, I am not utterly ungrateful, I hope. Besides, Hal really seemed like a brother to me, and his children shall not want while I have a penny. But, just between you and me, I'd rather give five thousand dollars than take them into my home. Mrs. Denham and I got along so quietly and cosily, that the prospect of two children coming to break up all our little stereotyped arrangements, is not at all pleasant."

"When do you expect them?"

"That's another bother!" a look of vexation crossing his face. "I wrote for them to meet me at Warrenton Junction the twentieth, and I have been down there waiting ever since—three days—until this morning, when I came up to Jay's Corner to see Turner about some leather he had promised me."

"And they did not come?"

"No; and the worst of it is, I can't get away to go down there again. I ought not to have gone now, for we are having some heavy orders coming in, and Lindley isn't quite as prompt as I wish he was. I wrote for them to be exact, as whoever had charge of them ought to have seen that they were duly forwarded."

"One would think you were speaking of an invoice of goods," Braley said, rather enjoying his friend's vexation.

I think there is a little spice of wickedness in the human composition, that is secretly pleased with other people's annoyances and embarrassments. We all suffer from them more or less ourselves, and it is a pleasant gratification to find our friends are not exempt. If we could only bear our own troubles with one-half the equanimity we can those of our friends, it would be delightful.

"I only wish I could dispose of them as easily," was the grum answer. "I don't mind the boy so much; but what do I know about educating, and providing suitable care, and instruction, and society, for a girl?"

"You can send her away to some of the seminaries to be educated."

"Perhaps I might," he said, thoughtfully. "But isn't she rather young yet? I don't know whether they must be of a specified age to gain admittance."

"How old is this girl?"

"I don't know, but I think she must be all of ten years. I don't ever remember of Hal's writing of his children particularly, and he hasn't been on but twice since he went to New Orleans. He was doing a good business there before the war; but fortunes in the South have melted rapidly since then."

"And been as rapidly amassed in the North."

"Yes, shoddy fortunes."

"But what does it matter?—isn't shoddy king? What is mind against money, or worth against wealth? In all great social revolutions there is, necessarily, a great deal of coarse sediment thrown to the surface. If, however, there is the glitter of *ore* among it, the filth and coarseness are at once forgotten, and its worshippers are legion."

"Very good; but it's the way of the world, and you and I can't remedy it; for, despite the continual protest of moralists and divines, Mammon is king in all climes and countries."

During this conversation, the young girl in the seat before them had sat motionless, with her cheek resting on a little, ungloved hand, and the brown eyes darkening and flashing beneath their drooping lids. The child had dropped asleep on the seat beside her, his pretty brown curls falling back from his fair, flushed face, and his dimpled hands clasped as if in prayer. Arthur Delano took his shawl from the back of the seat, and, leaning over, laid it lightly across the child's shoulders. The girl looked up with a sudden start.

"I beg your pardon," he said, with quiet assurance; "but the child is tired and heated, and there is a draft of chill air from the window which some one is insane enough to have open."

"Thank you," she said, in a faint, tremulous voice, and stooped over and kissed the child with passionate fondness. The cars were just slackening up; she turned half round, and, looking directly at Delano, asked:

"What station is this, sir?"

"Waverley, ma'am," he answered, bowing, and secretly hoping that Waverley was not her destination.

"I hope to meet a friend here—" (her husband, perhaps, Victor thought, with a vague feeling of dissatisfaction, and inwardly hoping that she might not meet him)—"would it be trespassing too much, to ask you to have a little care over Harry until I return?" she asked, in a low, eager voice.

"I shall only be too happy to oblige you," was the polite answer.

By this time the cars had stopped, and a

number of passengers were leaving the cars. She arose, and, looking at Delano with a quick, searching look, smiled slightly, though her lips were very white, and, pressing eagerly forward, passed out of the car in advance of the other passengers. They passed the down train from Lockport here, which had been waiting nearly an hour, and passengers also changed here for several stage routes, besides a branch train for Lansing, a little manufacturing town, some ten miles northwest of Waverley.

There was the usual bustle of passengers getting out and in, amid which the bell sounded, and the down train for Warrenton Junction steamed out of the depot, and then their own bell rang. A few tardy passengers came hurrying in, and Delano began to grow a little uneasy as the face he was expecting did not make its appearance.

"All aboard!" shouted the conductor, waving his hand.

Victor Delano could bear it no longer. He sprung from his seat, and, with two or three strides, was on the platform of the depot. The door of the ladies' room was open; he glanced in—it was empty. He turned hastily to the little restaurant, but that was also empty, save the presence of some four or five chronic loafers, whose faces were as familiar to him as the station itself, and which might be considered permanent fixtures of the establishment. The cars were already moving off, and he had barely time to swing himself on board the rear car. He made his way hastily through the cars, until he came to the one he had left.

"A pretty fix!" he ejaculated, throwing himself into the seat beside Braley. "At this rate I shall soon have an orphan asylum on my hands."

"This comes of making one's self agreeable to strange females with pretty faces," said Braley, laughing. "I wouldn't have believed, with that innocent face, that she was up to such a dodge as this."

"Dodge!" was the indignant rejoinder. "I hope you are not so uncharitable as to believe she did it purposely."

"I am afraid I am."

"Well, you may call me a fool, but I wouldn't be afraid to stake my life on the truth and purity of that young girl. I suppose the poor child got bewildered, and got into the wrong train. I wish I had gone out with her."

"In which case you would doubtless have

got on the wrong train likewise, leaving yon innocent infant to my fatherly protection," was the bantering rejoinder.

By this time the strange affair was being pretty generally discussed throughout the car, nearly all of whom agreed that it was an adroit dodge to get clear of the child; some believing the child her own, others, remembering her exceeding youthfulness, advanced the theory that she was hired to do it by some one who wished to get rid of the child for some unlawful purpose. There was an intense desire among the passengers, especially among the female portion of them, to see the child, and, as if for their particular gratification, the brown eyes suddenly unclosed with a look of bewildered surprise.

"Allie!" he called, sitting up and looking round. But seeing only strange faces, he broke into a low, frightened crying. Victor lifted the child in his arms, who immediately hushed his sobbing, and nestled contentedly against his breast, only looking up once to ask for "Allie." The conductor, with whom Victor was well acquainted, came along just then, and was made acquainted with the strange circumstance. He had noticed the girl; she took the train at Warrenton Junction; but did not notice her getting off at Waverley. He gave it as his opinion that she had got bewildered and taken the down train, or else the Lansing Branch. She would doubtless come in the first morning train, and, as she had a through ticket to Lockport, of course she would come directly there. "If Mr. Delano did not like to be troubled with the child, he presumed some of these ladies would care for the little fellow." And, as he was a very agreeable man, and extremely popular among the "ladies," some half dozen immediately volunteered to take charge of him. But Victor was hardly inclined to give him up, and the child was decidedly averse to being given up, clinging around his neck, and burying his curly head on his bosom whenever any one approached. And so when the train reached Lockport, although the child had fallen asleep again, Victor Delano did not feel at all inclined to give him in charge of any of the ladies who had volunteered, but, wrapping him carefully in his shawl, strode off through the dark, gusty night, with the child in his arms.

It was past eight o'clock, and Mrs. Denham his housekeeper had done looking for him that night, although Lindley was positive he would be there. Several large orders had

come in during his absence, and Lindley lacked the prompt energy of his partner in filling them, and so work had accumulated on his hands, until he had begun to feel, for him, somewhat hurried and anxious. He had just come round to see if he had arrived, as Victor came up the street.

"Halloo, Delano! Thank fortune you have come at last!" Lindley exclaimed, in a relieved voice.

"There isn't any trouble, I hope?"

"Trouble? well, I don't suppose *you* would call it trouble, but it troubles me exceedingly to have so much work to do. I haven't ate, slept, or recreated since you have been gone. I tell you what, Vic, don't you think business is just a little *too* good, just now? It don't give a fellow breathing time."

"O, I'll soon straighten that out," he said, laughing. "Come down very early in the morning, and we'll make short work of it."

Mrs. Denham had heard his voice, and came to the door. He walked in and laid the still sleeping child on the sofa.

"Where is the other?" she said, with a look of surprise.

"The other?"

"Yes, I thought you said there were two. I have made preparations for two, and—"

"O!" he said, with a look compounded of vexation and amusement, "this is quite another thing. The Thornton children did not come at all. I could wait no longer, and so came on. I cannot account for the delay. Have there been any letters during my absence?" he asked, abruptly.

Mrs. Denham took a letter from the mantel and handed it to him.

"Ah! New Orleans," glancing at the post-mark. "This will doubtless explain," hastily tearing off the envelop.

"Well, this is strange," he said, in a perplexed voice. "This letter is from Durfee, a friend of mine, to whom I entrusted the care of seeing them en route for the North. He says that he has followed my instructions, and that they will be here by the twentieth, the specified time. I don't see how there could have been any mistake, or how they could have got off the route. Well, I'll telegraph to-morrow to all the various points where connections are made, and, if they are in the country, of course they can be found."

"But this child—whose is this?"

"That is what I should like to know myself!" And hereupon he related the circum-

stance by which he had become possessed of the child.

"It's a pretty child," she said, bending over the little unconscious sleeper. "I don't see how she could have the heart to desert him."

"She hasn't, Mrs. Denham, you may depend. You wouldn't believe it, if you had seen her. Why, she is scarcely more than a child herself—not more than sixteen—and with one of the sweetest, purest faces you ever saw."

Mrs. Denham smiled quietly to herself, and wondered, if the woman had been old or plain, if he would have had as much faith in her, or in fact troubled himself about the child at all. But she simply said:

"I hope she will come, I am sure, for I hardly know what we could do with him."

The next morning, Victor Delano hurried through his work at the store with more than his usual energy. His office window commanded a view of the depot, and when the morning train from Warrenton Junction came in, he threw down his pen, and went and stood in the window, confidently expecting to see his strange acquaintance of the cars. But though he watched until long after the time, neither carriage nor pedestrian came down the street. He went back to his work with a feeling of disappointment. But she would certainly come at night, he thought, and applied himself to his business with renewed vigor.

He found the child quite content with Mrs. Denham, when he went up to dinner, although asking repeatedly "when Allie would come."

Half an hour before the evening train was due, Victor was at the station waiting. He had telegraphed to various places, but could get no trace of "two children." He was completely at a loss what course to pursue. Possibly something might have occurred to prevent their starting after his friend had written. If they did not come to-night, he would telegraph to New Orleans the next day and ascertain. And so revolving these thoughts in his mind, he paced absently up and down the platform, thinking *she* would certainly come to-night. So completely absorbed was he, that he passed two young ladies—particular favorites of his—without seeing them, much to their disappointment. But he heard, in a half-unconscious way, one of them ask:

"What is the matter with Victor Delano?" And a voice which he recognized as Braley's, laughingly responded:

"Family cares, Miss Graham." Whereupon they all laughed.

But he saw nothing amusing in it, and so kept on in his walk. As the moment drew nigh for the arrival of the train, he grew nervous and timid; a decidedly novel sensation for the careless, nonchalant, self-possessed Victor Delano to experience. And when, a moment later, the distant whistle of the locomotive smote his ear, his heart gave a quick bound, and then went on beating as if it were absolutely wild. But it stood still enough, with a dull, heavy sense of pain, when one after another of the passengers emerged from the cars, and *she* was not among them. For a moment I am afraid he utterly forgot Hal Thornton's orphan children; but the conductor was more thoughtful.

"I inquired about those children, Delano," he said, coming up to him. "Maybury, the station master at the Junction, is positive that no children answering your description have been at his place for a week. By the way, has that young woman been after the child yet?"

"No. I had hoped you would know something about it, that is, if she did not come herself."

"I supposed she would come in on Jeffries's train, this morning. It's a strange affair. I've been on the road fifteen years, and this is the first thing of the kind that has ever occurred. I'll inquire at Waverley to-morrow, also of Dalton, conductor on the Lansing Branch, and I'll look round a little myself at Warrenton besides. Keep the child a day or two, then, if no one claims him, and I can find no trace of the girl, you can take him to the almshouse. Come down to-morrow night," he added, hurriedly, as the cars began moving off.

Victor went back into the ladies' room, but there were only two old ladies, who belonged in Lockport, in the apartment. As he came out to the platform, a porter touched him on the shoulder.

"There's a trunk here for you—shall I take it up to the house?"

"A trunk? Are you sure it is for me? It must be some sort of a mistake," turning and following the man to the pile of baggage.

There was a dainty little enamelled card suspended by a string from the handle of the trunk. The man held down his lantern, and Victor stooped over and took the bit of card between his fingers, turning it carefully to the light. Yes, it certainly was directed to

him, and in the most dainty and graceful of feminine chirography, too. He ordered it taken at once to the house, and went slowly homeward, wondering if some perverse spirit had not taken unlimited control of his destiny.

The trunk was in the hall when he arrived. It was a small, light leather trunk, considerably worn, and thickly-studded with brass nails. He quickly loosed the straps, but it was closely-locked, and he found it impossible to unlock it with any key he had. He hesitated a moment, and then took out the screws and removed the lock. He found the trunk closely-packed with children's clothing. His first thought was that it belonged to Thornton's children, and had somehow got separated from the rest of their baggage, and come on to its address.

"It all belongs to one child," Mrs. Denham said, positively. "Don't you see the frocks are all of a size? And, upon my soul, I believe they are just the thing for little Harry!" she cried, suddenly, lifting one as she spoke. A slip of paper fluttered to the floor. Victor picked it up and read:

"Harry's wardrobe," in the same delicate hand that had written the address on the card.

"Well, I do declare!" said Mrs. Denham, sitting down on the stairs, and gazing at the trunk in a sort of helpless astonishment. "If this isn't just the queerest affair! She knew your name, too. Well, I never!"

"I don't see but we shall have to keep him," Victor said, presently. "She evidently expects us to, and perhaps some day she will come for him. I dislike sending him to the almshouse. If you could manage to get along with him—" he said, hesitatingly.

"To be sure I can; he isn't a bit of trouble. I didn't know what to do about clothes for him, but this makes that all right. I'm sure I'd like to keep him, if it wont trouble you too much."

"But when the Thorntons come?" he said, dolefully, the sudden accession of family honors quite overcoming him.

"They haven't come yet. When they do, if we can't get along, we can send him away then just as well, you know."

"So we can. Mrs. Denham, I give it all up to your charge; and, in the meantime, I hope, if there are more orphan or fatherless children to be provided for, their friends will forward them at once to my address. Do you think we could accommodate a few more,

Mrs. Denham?" an amused smile breaking up the perplexity in his face.

The next day he telegraphed to Durfee, and received answer that they had left New Orleans as arranged. He immediately sat down and wrote to Durfee for a full and accurate description of the children, that he might set the police at work. It was the most mysterious thing; and he grew thin and nervous thinking about it.

He had met the conductor according to agreement, who said the only trace he could get was that Jeffries said he had an indistinct recollection of a young girl, answering that description, getting into his train at Waverley. Wasn't positive, but thought she went through to the Junction. Had inquired there himself, but no one had any recollection of such a person. Indeed, there were so many who would answer the same general description, that it was very difficult getting a trace where they had nothing more accurate. And so the matter rested.

Master Harry took kindly to his new home, and was passionately fond of Victor, who, in turn, became equally attached to him. Victor had a little theory of his own about the affair, as follows: She was the child's elder sister, who, finding herself unable to provide for them both, had, by some subtle affinity, been attracted toward himself (he liked this part of the theory exceedingly), and by it, induced to trust the child to his care. He wasn't quite sure about the impelling circumstances, whether it was an intemperate father, or a vicious stepmother, but that it was one or the other, he was quite sure. He was very careful not to broach his theory to any one, but enjoyed it all to himself, and for so practical and successful a business man, he built some exceedingly airy castles, I must admit.

And still no trace was discovered of the missing children, and he awaited with anxiety the letter from his friend, by which he hoped to be able to get some clew to them. At last the much-desired letter came, and he hastened to avail himself of the information which it contained. He passed rapidly over the words of surprise and conjecture, and then he came to the description. He read a few lines, and sprang to his feet with a hasty expletive. The cause was quite apparent when one looked at the description of the "children."

"The eldest," the letter read, "is a girl of sixteen years, slight, rather below the medium height, very fair, with large brown eyes, and

wavy, brown hair, and a peculiar innocent, childlike expression of countenance." Here followed a description of her dress, etc. "The boy," it continued, "is a trifle over two years, and resembles his sister strongly, having the same complexion, eyes and hair, save that hers is perhaps a shade darker. The child's hair curls profusely, and he is a very lovely child. Their names are Alice and Harry Thornton, and, as the petted children of your foster-brother, I know you will spare no trouble or expense to discover them." The letter contained some few more specialties of description, among them that of baggage, including a "small, light leather trunk, much worn, and thickly-studded with brass nails," and ended by desiring to be informed of the progress of the search.

It all came to him like a flash. The "strange affair" was all plain enough now, for he saw at once that his mysterious travelling companion and Alice Thornton were one and the same. But how to find her—that was not quite so plain. He remembered, with mortification and self-disgust, his conversation with Braley, every word of which she undoubtedly heard. He remembered how devoutly he had wished them "old enough to take care of themselves," yet now, with charming inconsistency, he would have given half his fortune for the privilege of taking care of *one* of them. What a weak, selfish fellow she must have thought him! No wonder—any girl of spirit would have done the same—that she resolved not to accept his reluctant bounty. But where was she? A young, inexperienced girl, without money or friends, what would be her fate? Hal's girl, too! The thought drove him frantic. Well, he would find her, if his business all went to the deuce. Full of this resolution, he went up to the house and made Mrs. Denham acquainted with the new turn affairs had taken, to her equal surprise and gratification.

"And to think we came near sending him to the almshouse!" she said, in a shocked voice.

"Perhaps *she* is already in one," he answered, gloomily.

"Don't you believe it! She's smart, and has got spirit, or she wouldn't have done as she did, and folks of that stamp don't often bring up in the almshouse, though I don't wonder you are worried. I'm glad we've got the boy, for I don't believe she would go very far from him. She's somewhere between here and Warrenton, you may depend."

"If I thought she was, I would go alone. I had thought of employing a detective."

"Try it alone first, that is my advice; then, if you do not succeed, you can procure assistance. I suppose you had rather find her yourself, than a stranger should do it."

"Mrs. Denham, I'd give half I'm worth to find her before to-morrow night! If she is between here and Warrenton Junction, I'll find her if I have to search every house between here and there!" he exclaimed, energetically.

Pursuant to this determination, he took the afternoon train for Waverley, intending to stop there over night, and go down on the Lansing Branch in the morning. Stepping on the platform at Waverley he ran full upon Turner, the man of whom he had purchased the leather at Jay's Corner.

"Delano, as I live!" exclaimed the surprised tanner. "I was on my way to Lockport to see you. I've got a lot of hides that I got at a discount, and they're a prime lot, too, and I wanted you to see 'em. Come, go home with me to-night, and take a look at them. I think you'll find 'twill pay, for I can afford to let you have them at a low figure. Come, what do you say? We've got just time to get our tickets."

"I had business at Waverley," he said, hesitatingly.

"You can stop there to-morrow."

"Well, perhaps to-morrow will do just as well, as you are so anxious," following him a little reluctantly to the ticket-office. "Well, the idea is, there's a fellow up to the Junction that wants 'em, but I've had considerable dealings with you, first and last, and you've always done the fair thing by me, and I want you to have the advantage of the bargain. I told him if they wasn't sold by to-morrow night, he could have 'em," he explained, as they took their seat in the cars.

It was quite dark when they arrived at Jay's Corner, and Turner said:

"It's too late to go round to the tannery to-night. Go right home with me, and in the morning we'll go down and take a look at them."

Victor had been there several times, and so felt perfectly free to accept the invitation. He was sure of a cordial invitation from little Mrs. Turner and her half-dozen "olive branches." Mr. Turner was not expected home that night by his family, whom they saw at supper as they passed the window.

"My wife has got a young girl sewing for

her," he said, pausing with his hand on the knob; "you wont mind?"

"O no; not if my coming will not inconvenience your wife."

"Trust Mollie for that! I never knew her at a loss to provide for a friend yet. Mollie," throwing open the door, "hold on a bit and we'll help you!"

Seven pairs of astonished eyes were turned towards the door, but Victor Delano saw only one. They were very pretty eyes, large, and soft, and brown, but just now with a startled look in their clear depths that was almost painful. Victor had a vague impression that Mrs. Turner was speaking to him, but what she was saying he had not the most remote idea. The girl had more self-possession, though, or keener hearing, for she bowed ceremoniously, though her face was white, and her hands trembled violently. Then he apprehended that she was introducing him to the young lady, and he bowed in return, though with little of that easy gallantry for which he was celebrated.

"I have met the lady before," he said, quietly, as he took his seat at the table.

How that meal passed Victor Delano never had any very distinct idea; but when it was over, and the children had gone into the kitchen with their mother, who was busy about some household task, and Mr. Turner had gone out for a smoke, Victor went and stood before her.

"Thank God I have found you, Alice Thornton!" he said, fervently.

She gave him one quick, surprised glance.

"You know me!"

"Yes, at last. O, you foolish child! why did you run away from me in that mysterious manner? I have not known a moment's peace since. I have telegraphed to all manner of possible and impossible places, but never knew until to-day that Hal Thornton's 'little girl,' was the young lady who honored me by leaving her dearest earthly treasure in my keeping. Do you know, little one, that I was vain enough to fancy that she was in some way attracted towards me, and chose to trust me before any other?"

A faint flush stole into the downcast face. He leaned over her and looked into her eyes.

"You will go home with me in the morning, Alice?"

"I am large enough to take care of myself," demurely.

"I don't think so. I have a vague presen-

timent that I never shall. Do you believe in presentiments, little girl?"

"Not—not much," she said, blushing.

"I came from home to-day for no other purpose than to find you, Alice, and I would have spent every dollar I have in the world before I would have given you up."

"But you don't know anything about taking care of girls, you know."

"But I am very anxious to learn. I know you think I am a heartless, selfish brute—I don't wonder you think so; but, O Alice, if you only knew how much I have suffered for that thoughtless, ungenerous speech, you would pity me, if you could not forgive me!"

"Dear Uncle Victor," she cried, putting out both her hands, "it's only my foolishness. I thought you would be glad to be clear of the trouble of me. I didn't mean to pain you, indeed I didn't. I ought to have known better, for papa always told me how good, and noble, and generous, you were. But I felt very sensitive about coming, even after you wrote that kind letter to Mr. Durfee about it. I shrank so from being a burden to you, for I knew that, really, I had no claim on you. I am very handy with a needle, and when I heard you say—what you did, I formed a sudden resolution to see if I could not take care of myself; but I did not dare

attempt to take Harry with me, and so adopted that method to leave him in your care. I want to see the darling so, that I—I don't know but I will go home with you."

"And let me take care of you, eh?"

"A little while."

"Always, I hope," was the fervent answer.

Matters were duly explained to the Turners, and the next day Victor Delano walked up the streets of Lockport with a pretty, brown-eyed girl on his arm, who engrossed his attention so closely that a young lady who lived just across the way from him (and who had been charmingly enthusiastic all summer over balcony gardening, because it gave one such a nice chance to be out mornings and evenings, and somebody has said that "a woman never looked so well as when surrounded by flowers,") grew absolutely wild with jealousy, and, as the sequel proved, not without cause; for, as the months went by, Victor displayed such an astonishing aptitude for "taking care of girls," that when another autumn came round, he stoutly insisted that he had the lesson absolutely perfect, all of which Alice as stoutly denied, and then, with delightful inconsistency, consented to give herself to him indefinitely, which was a very common ending to a strange affair.

A TRAGIC FOURTH OF JULY.

BY GEORGE H. COOMER.

"We had been five years in Indiana," said Mrs. Rayburn, "unmolested by the savages; yet, as perpetual animosity existed between them and the whites, we had never felt wholly secure. A brief period only had elapsed since the Shawnee exodus from the 'Dark and Bloody Ground,' in Kentucky, and with the change of location the tribe had forgotten none of its cruel instincts. General Harrison, at this time governor of Indiana Territory, was energetic in his measures against the ferocious enemy, and it was not long after that he won the famous battle of Tippecanoe.

"That we had thus far suffered only through apprehension, may have been owing to the fact that the Indians found white settlers more in their immediate vicinity. Upon such they had committed many outrages, shooting the cattle of the pale-face, or scalping incautious hunters who ventured too wide from their cabins.

"You may ask why a powerful band of savages could not as readily have killed a man in his cabin as elsewhere. They sometimes did so, but it was not their favorite method. There was a peculiarity in their mode of warfare for which I could never account. They did not improve their opportunities; they would be months in compassing the destruction of an enemy, who, to appearance, was already in their power.

"When the Shawnees dwelt upon the 'Dark and Bloody Ground,' they had one antagonist in their very midst—a solitary pioneer. Yet this one man, Daniel Boone, though a thousand warriors thirsted for his blood, lived to see his adversaries overwhelmed with discomfiture and driven across the Ohio.

"In the summer of 1811 our settlement consisted of some twenty families, happier, perhaps, with all their wants and hardships, than the more conventional people of older communities; for, however rude our surroundings, they were the same with all, and this, wherever occurring, is one of the main-springs of content. This was shortly before the last war with England, and even we, away out in the wilderness, saw the skirts of the gathering cloud. I well remember our excitement over the affair of the President and Little Belt, and how we praised Captain Rogers,

and laughed at the mortification of poor Bingham. The men of the settlement, sturdy supporters of Mr. Madison, were ready at any moment to shoulder firelocks. Father had once been a Federalist, and on Mr. Jefferson's inauguration, mother had thought of hiding her Bible under the great rocking-chair; but time had discovered the absurdity of their apprehensions, and they had since endorsed even the embargo. England, the 'bulwark of our religion,' was no longer infallible; and no more, in their imagination, was Bonaparte a monster.

"As the Fourth of July approached, our patriotism became intensified. Had it been in our power, we would have welcomed the day with a grand demonstration in keeping with the occasion; but as it was, our young men simply ushered in the morning by rifle salutes in honor of Mr. Madison, Captain Rogers and the frigate President. They then proceeded upon a general hunt in the forest, returning in the afternoon with many trophies of their skill. Brother Charles had shot a gray cougar, and Frank Rayburn a catamount.

"Towards night, the young people had assembled in a romantic valley, surrounded by rocks, and shaded with trees of such enormous size that they must have struck their roots in earth before Columbus set sail from Palos. The ground was smooth and yielding as a carpet. Under the great boughs slept a soft twilight, with now and then a sun-ray shooting across it like an arrow of fire. Here we amused ourselves with rustic plays, or, fixing swings to the branches, swept to and fro in the air, often at a giddy height from the floor of leaves and moss.

"Many of the middle-aged settlers were present, some of them entering joyously into our sports, while others, standing apart, talked of the anticipated struggle with Britain, of the 'impressment system,' the 'Chesapeake and Leopard,' the 'orders in council,' of the Berlin and Milan decrees, and of Bonaparte. Then I would occasionally catch the names of 'Lodi,' 'Austerlitz,' 'Wagram,' and, I suppose, had any zealous Federalist been present, he would have whispered of 'French influence.'

"The younger portion of us, however, cared

nothing for dry politics, though certainly we did think the frigate President a wonderful ship, and Captain Rogers a very great man. Our amusements were continued with all the hilarity of young hearts; but even into the wilderness we had carried the passions of human nature, and perhaps there were among us the same resentment for real or fancied slights, the same jealousies and preferences, that have existed since Rachel was beautiful and Leah was tender-eyed, and, of course, homely.

"If Jonathan Waitman swung me more than five minutes at a time, Frank Rayburn was angry; and if Frank Rayburn swung me, Jonathan Waitman sat down on a rock, looking as if he thought the Fourth of July no better than the eighth of August.

"Once, just at sunset, as the dying beams flamed among the rocks, in swinging near a cliff all broken with chasms and covered with creeping vines, I caught sight of a tuft of feathers, motionless at first, then suddenly disappearing. It might be the spotted plumage of a partridge, frightened by our noise from her nest; yet it excited my curiosity, and on swinging again to the same position, I threw a quick glance along the cliff, but saw nothing having the appearance of life, save what seemed the tail of a gray squirrel, that sank straight down behind the tangled shrubs.

"As the dusk of evening deepened, we commenced a rustic masquerade. Regardless of the July heat, many of the young men threw bearskins across their shoulders. With faces stained to the hue of copper, and heads decorated with the quills of the wild turkey, they looked like the redoubtable braves of the Miami and Wabash. I could recognize Frank Rayburn only by his voice, and the jealousy he manifested at my mischievous flirting with a rival 'brave,' who, I felt certain, for all his picturesque trappings, bore the unromantic name of Jonathan.

Brandishing their knives, the young men would essay the terrible warwhoop of the Shawnees; but, though it then seemed to me that the attempt at imitation was tolerably successful, I was presently to learn that their efforts fell far short of the indescribable shriek of the Indian. It was evident, however, that Frank and Jonathan each wished the other a Walk-in-the-Water or a Little Turtle.

"Soon after sunset the moon arose, round and glorious, making the leaves like silver. I shortly observed that the disguise of others of our party was still more artful than Frank's,

for not all my ingenuity could penetrate it, I spoke in metaphorical sentences to the very impersonation of a Shawnee warrior; but he answered only with a surly grunt, and passed on.

"Who could he be? Not Tom Archer, for Tom was yonder, doing his best to fascinate Mary Phillips, as a Shawnee brave, having often failed in a like attempt as a farmer lad. Not brother Charlie nor Will Osgood, for I had spoken with them but a moment before. Certainly, he was a great actor; 'the painting was almost the natural man;' but I would identify him yet. He was soon followed by another as taciturn as himself.

"My own face had been stained with the juice of berries, and with all the enthusiasm of my young heart, I acted the Indian maiden; but at length a vague terror crept upon me. The number of our party seemed strangely augmented. I perceived one of my girl companions look steadfastly at the face of an actor near her, and then glance at me with an expression of inquiry and alarm. I scanned the company as closely as possible, but we had so large a theatre, were so scattered among the trees, and the moon, though full, threw so faint a light between the giant trunks, that I could hardly be sure of any one's identity. I was certain, however, that our party was larger than at first, and that many of those present differed in appearance from our disguised friends. Having arrived at this conclusion, I was, of course, dreadfully startled, yet knew not how to act.

"While hesitating as to the course I should pursue, it was with unspeakable terror that I saw half a dozen dusky figures glide down a chasm between the rocks, and crouch in the black shadow at the base of the cliff. Frank Rayburn was now at my side, and I was about to whisper my terror, when behind me, in front, and all around, from every shadow of a tree, from every hollow in the rocks, rang forth yells and awful howls, such as I should never have supposed the human throat could utter. At the same moment, I saw Frank grasped by two Indians, and felt a brawny hand clutch my hair, while a hatchet circled above my head like a flash. A deathly faintness seized me, and though uninjured, I sank to the ground, yet retained sufficient consciousness to know that an Indian was binding my arms. He then ordered me to rise, and when I had done so, bound me to the same tree from behind which he had sprung to seize me.

"The Indians were now swarming in the valley. They numbered at least a hundred, yet had thought it necessary to employ stratagem in attacking our small party. A simultaneous attack, by an equal number, had been made upon the houses of the settlement, all of which were burned. The warriors who had so cunningly surprised us at our game of 'Shawnee,' now led us from the valley, which they had made a horrid scene of slaughter. In the light of the burning houses they joined their plundering companions.

"Of the eighty-eight people comprising our settlement, only twenty-two were left alive; but it chanced that the whole of my father's family was among the latter, as was also Frank Rayburn. I had never cared anything for Frank until the moment when we started off through the forest with those cruel savages. Then, every human creature that I had known in our happy little community became dear to me; and it somehow happened that so much of my heart as went out towards Frank, in that dreadful hour of sorrow, never came back to me, but drew to itself instead all the tender feelings of my soul, in after days, to keep it company.

"The Shawnees soon divided their force, one party, with all the women and children captives, turning to the left, towards the Wabash, while the other, with the male prisoners, eight in number, continued the course first taken.

"I suspect that you entertain glowing ideas of what some people call the romantic freedom of Indian life; if so, I wish that I could picture to you the Shawnee village to which we were conducted. You may have seen a collection of cabins inhabited by negro slaves; but such a hamlet presents scenes of comfort and even opulence, compared with what we beheld in those wigwags that constituted the metropolitan abode of our captors.

"We were subjected to the most cruel treatment, yet this was as nothing; anxiety for our friends, who had been carried, we knew not where, engrossed all our thoughts. Not long, however, did our suspense continue.

"One evening, when the dark was softly gathering, and 'the crow,' as you writers would quote, 'made wing to the rooky wood,' there was a commotion in the village. A band of warriors was announced as approaching. Doubtless they were Shawnees, and perhaps had many scalps. Old men and youthful braves, the squaw and the pappoose, were ready with savage welcome. But at the moment when my heart was overflowing with disgust at this fresh arrival of barbarians, a terrible confusion seized the lately exultant villagers. Shouts of vengeance and victory, in unmistakable Saxon, filled us with joy and amazement. The twenty warriors of the village, taken completely by surprise, were all either instantly killed or dispersed; while the counterfeit Shawnees, who had so entirely outwitted the enemy, stood before us in the persons of the friends we had lately mourned. How eagerly we listened to their story.

"Cruelly bound, they had been left in charge of some twenty warriors; but while the enemy slept, one of the white men having succeeded in freeing himself from the deerskin thongs, released his companions. They killed their savage guards to the last man; then dressing in full Indian costume, started after their friends, finding us after a day's search.

"They now threw off the long Indian hair, with which, together with paint and feathers, their heads had been rendered hideous, and then, all together we started for the nearest settlement. Under a great tree, beside a branch of the Wabash, I consented to Mrs. Rayburn, should we ever again be the home of civilized man. You are a kept my engagement."



A TROUBLESOME BOARDER.

BY THEODORE ARNOLD.

"But I tell you, Dode, I heard it!" said Bessie Winship, with her blue eyes very wide open.

"You heard your own breath," I answered, negligently.

"No such thing! I heard a whisper as plainly as I hear my own voice now."

"Fiddle-de-dee!" says I.

Bessie flung angrily away from me, and going to the deep window-seat, threw herself down there, and sat looking out into the gardens. There was a red spot in each of her cheeks, and she was twisting the curtain-fringe in a way that Miss Markham would not have liked to see.

I looked at her and considered. After all, Bessie wasn't a fool, and there might be a little foundation for her story. Indeed, it would have interested me, had I not been quite engrossed by other thoughts at the moment. It was only when she flung out so and left me to myself, that I waked up to the thought that she had tried to tell me a marvellous story, and I had scouted it without listening.

Five of us had come down from the city, and were spending a couple of months in this quiet country town of Dover. Frank Nagle had found it out in the spring, and had come back in raptures. "Just the place we want," he protested, rubbing his hands in a way he has when things go about right with him. "It is an estate of, maybe, a hundred acres set down in the midst of mountains. There is a little pond not far off, and a capital trout-stream about half a mile from the house. Not a neighbor in sight, nothing visible but fields of grass, wheat, potatoes and turnips, and farther off, woods and mountains closing up the view. The house ought to be of stone, but it is only wood. If it were stone it would be a castle, and have a history, a vault, and a ghost. Being only wooden, I suppose there can't be much romance about it, unless Miss Marvale may be able to invest it with some. But it is mighty comfortable, with large rooms that are light and clean, lots of grass and clover, and 'garden-sass,' and chickens, and blue-berries, and fences to jump over, and cherry-trees, and gooseberry bushes, and—why don't you stop me, Dode? I am all out of breath."

"I do so like a nice old farmhouse!" says Bessie.

"But this isn't a farmhouse," Frank said. "It was built for a gentleman's residence by Mr. Markham's grandfather, and when his fortunes dried up, he just tacked on the farming business, but kept it pretty well out of sight, and his grandson does the same. You needn't expect to see piles of logs in front of the house, nor pigs rooting about the door-steps. Everything is done decently and in order, and the great castle of a place looks like a decaying aristocratic residence, as you approach it."

We liked Frank's description so well that we sent him straight back to Dover to engage board for five during July and August. Mr. Markham rather objected to so many, had only meant to take a gentleman and wife, or, at most, two or three ladies and gentlemen, had never received any boarders before, and was afraid he mightn't like it. There was only himself and his sister in the family, he said, and they had been used to living quietly.

Frank promised everything, and the couple finally consented to let us all come. We sent down a pair of horses and carriages, and at a pinch our host could get us three more horses for an occasional riding party. We promised not to bring any servants with us, and not to have a great deal of company.

Finally, all the terms of our treaty arranged and ratified, we five started for our distant Canaan on a fine July morning. While we are rattling over our first seventy-five or a hundred miles of railroad, let me give a sketch of our party. First then, that I may not be accused of false modesty, behold me, Theodore Arnold, the historian of the party. For further particulars, apply to my friends. Then comes Frank Nagle, a middle-sized, slight, active, good-natured, generous fellow, with a spice of Irish blood in his veins, a passably handsome face, and a pocket full of money. Frank was cut out for a major-domo. Whatever was up in the gregarious style of amusements, he always had the direction of. Then there was Mr. Winthrop Alford, a different person altogether. Mr. Alford was very talented, had a noble nature and a handsome person, but was so outrageously proud and reserved

that I have many a time felt as though I would have liked to give him a good round blow between the eyes, to see if it would knock him off that mental pedestal of his. I hardly know how he happened to be one of our party. We were none of us very intimate with him, and wouldn't have thought of inviting him. But he expressed a sort of indifferent half wish when he heard that we were going, and Frank, in his gushing way, finished the business. Of course we were glad to have him, for no one could be more agreeable than Mr. Winthrop Alford when he chose. He was a lawyer with a good practice, and a good property, and handed over his money like a prince.

"O, no matter about particulars," he interrupted, when Frank was explaining ways and means. "You are to see to that, you know, and whatever money you want of me you are to ask for. Here is five hundred to begin with. Do you wish for more? Only please don't present a bill of items. I should only use it to light my cigar."

So saying, Mr. Alford placed a choice Havana between his beautifully-shaped lips, dropped the broad, brown-fringed eyelids over his lazy, lustrous blue eyes, watched till the weed got well afire, then sauntered indolently out of my office. But, indolent as he looked, I had seen him that morning pleading a case in a way that almost took me off my feet, it was so fiery eloquent. If I were to be tried for my life, unless it were for some sneaking crime, I would like to have Mr. Winthrop Alford for my lawyer. How those eyes of his could flash! How that rich voice could ring its thousand changes! How his form would swell and tower! How his graceful hands would persuade or command! How his noble face would drop its languid, heavy mask, and shine like some alabaster vase with a lamp inside! I always felt a desire to call Mr. Alford your lordship. I think there must have been an earldom somewhere in his family. But this didn't prevent my getting out of patience with him sometimes, and wishing I could see him act a little less dignified and self-controlled.

I have spoken of Bessie Winship. She was one of those pretty, healthy, good-hearted, thoroughly girlish girls whom everybody likes, and who are not so grand as to frighten themselves and everybody else, but who like to have a good time and know how to have it. Bessie was Frank Nagle's half-sister, and I had boarded with them time out of mind. So

we were like one family, and the grand lawyer and Miss Marvale—but there, I haven't mentioned our grand lady.

Miss Marvale was one of those ladies who are adored by a few, hated by many, and respected by all. She was as much like Mr. Alford as a woman can be like a man, the same lofty manner, the same pride and reserve; but, when you came to know her, the tenderest, noblest heart that ever beat. She couldn't stoop to everybody, and the mean and jealous hated her, as such inevitably do hate their superiors. I always adored Miss Marvale, and in return she petted me, and took my part if any one dared to call me a wild fellow, and privately expostulated with me when she herself thought me wild. She and I were just of an age, twenty-eight, and had been acquainted for ten years before arriving at this stage of intimacy. It happened thus: I had always looked on her as a lofty person quite out of my style, and had taken no pains whatever to please her, when one day I overheard her indignantly reproving some gossip who was trying to report a scandal about me. I stood mute with astonishment and delight while she denounced the scandal-monger in that sweet, ringing voice of hers, and spoke words of praise and charitable indulgence of me; and then I stepped forward, bent my knee and kissed her hand, vowing myself her true knight forever.

"You foolish fellow!" she said, laughing and blushing, yet touched, for she could see the earnest feeling under my acting.

Miss Marvale was enchanting when she blushed, which was very seldom. The little shyness and half-laughing embarrassment were in charming contrast with her usual somewhat stately manner.

Bessie fairly bowed down and worshipped her friend, and would no sooner have done anything of which she disapproved, than she would have put that pretty nose of hers to a block to have it chopped off.

Well, to return to my story. We had a pleasant enough journey by rail, stayed all night at a hotel at the terminus, then took a stage-coach five miles further the next morning, and were met at the little village of Dover by Mr. Markham, with a carryall and span of very respectable horses to take us the four miles that remained of our journey. In three minutes we were out of sight of the little cluster of houses they called a village, and shut into a wild road with wooded rocks and crags rising on both sides. In ten minutes

more we might have thought that there wasn't a settlement within fifty miles. We all exclaimed with delight, and I could hardly persuade Bessie not to jump out of the carry-all every two minutes to pick flowers by the roadside.

"You'll find flowers enough all about," Mr. Markham said, smiling indulgently into her bright face.

There were forests worth looking at, none of your trumpery little knock-kneed oaks and stripling elms, but good solid trees that soared loftily, and stood with their feet tangled in underbrush that threw itself about and grew with almost tropical luxuriance. Little brooks and streamlets went laughing and gurgling about their business, birds sang as if they were crazy, and over all was the summer sunshine. Presently the trees thinned to a fringe at the right, and a broad wheat-field waved and dimpled behind them. Then all sorts of fields, corn and grass chiefly, then a glimpse of clustered outhouses half hidden in a great grove of beeches, lastly, a rambling, stately old house that, as Frank had said, ought to have been of stone. It had a centre and two unequal wings, one lower than the main body, the other running up almost into a tower. This house had once been painted a dark stone-color, but the paint had nearly worn off, and the wood showed a mottled gray and brown between the mantling vines that hung their swinging greenery everywhere from basement to eaves, and even up the corners of the roof and about the huge square chimneys. The windows and doors stood open, there were white curtains blowing out, and in spite of the somewhat decayed look of everything, we all agreed that we could not have chanced upon a pleasanter summer home.

We were welcomed by Miss Markham, an elderly spinster of respectable and grave aspect, and immediately assigned to our chambers which were in the main part of the house.

"O, I was in hopes that you would put me in one of those highest rooms at the end of the house," Bessie said.

The lady, for lady she was, seemed to stiffen a little at this.

"The south wing has always been kept for the family," she said.

The staircase leading to the second floor went up from the hall in the middle of the house, and there were four large chambers, two in front and two back, the entry running

straight between them and extending into the wings. Of these four chambers Miss Markham had the front and Bessie the back on the right of the stairs and towards the south wing where Mr. and Miss Markham had their rooms, and Mr. Alford had the front one on the left of the stairs, while Frank and I occupied the one opposite his. The staircases leading to the attics of the middle house and the north wing were somewhere out of sight, but from our hall we could look straight to the end of the south wing and see a staircase with a door at the foot, that led up to the next floor where were supposed to be only store-rooms. Just at the foot of this staircase was Mr. Markham's chamber at the back of the house, and opposite it, at the front, his sister's. The other front room between hers and Miss Markham's was unoccupied, but I found that a gray, old hired man had the room between Mr. Markham's and Bessie's. So we were all on one floor.

And now at last I come back to the day two weeks after our arrival when Bessie and I were alone in the parlor, and when she tried to make me believe that she had heard a strange whisper come down that upper flight of stairs at the end of the south wing.

I looked at Bessie as she sat there in the window panting, and concluded that I might as well make up and listen to what she had to say.

"Bessie!" I said, in my softest tones.

She only gave her shoulders a hitch, and leaned out the window. She looked profoundly pretty, and was well worth the trouble of getting up even on a hot day like that. I started out of my chair, went to her, and before she knew it, had caught her as she sat half-wrapped in the curtain and given her a good kiss on that tempting rose in her cheek. I would have liked to kiss her on the lips, but I am a young man of strict principles, and I always leave the lips sacred to a lover. Any friend may kiss a girl on the cheek.

"You—you—saucy fellow!" stammered Bessie, really vexed, and trying to free herself.

I let her go, and got up off my knees.

"What do you sit there looking so devilishly pretty for if you don't want to be kissed?" I asked. "It's your own fault."

Bessie gave me a gleaming glance meant to be angry, but succeeding in only being saucy, and answered never a word.

"I've come to make up. Bessie," I said. "The truth is, I didn't hear a word of your story. I was thinking how bright your eyes

were, and what a lovely mouth you have, and I answered at random. Tell me the whole over again, and I'll shut my eyes and listen."

"Now, Dode, if you will be in earnest and behave yourself, I really want to tell you," she said. "But if you are going to joke—"

I satisfied her of my good behaviour, and she began again.

"You know, Dode, my room is the last in this part of the house. Well, I always thought it odd that the folks should be so stiff about the south wing, and I have kept my eyes open to what went on there. I have found out that there certainly is some one up stairs, whom they are keeping sly. I have heard noises from the upper floor, and I have seen both Mr. and Miss Markham go up there. They won't go if they see any one looking, but I have seen them go. Then yesterday when I didn't come down to breakfast, I heard after a while a step in the hall and a rattle of dishes as if some one carrying a tray had stumbled. I opened my door, thinking that somebody was bringing me my breakfast, and there was Miss Markham and the old hired man Jacob, going towards the upper stairs, she carrying a waiter with breakfast, and he with a coil of rope in his hand. They didn't see me and I quickly drew back and shut my door. Since then I have been in torment. They are such sober, queer people, living here all alone by themselves in this great house, and letting nobody into that high story, though we have hinted time and again what a fine view there must be from it, that really I have almost made up my mind that they have some one a prisoner in that south wing."

Bessie stopped in her low-voiced recital and glanced apprehensively about; but there was no one within hearing. Miss Markham was off attending to household affairs, Mr. Markham was out in the fields mowing with his men, Miss Marvale was sitting under a tree in front of the house, her arms thrown up over her head as she leaned against the great bole, her eyes half shut in some delicious summer reverie, Frank was off trouting, and Mr. Alford was in his room.

Bessie drew a little nearer to me.

"I got up very early this morning," she said. "It was hardly light, and must have been about three o'clock. I felt nervous and could not sleep. All night I had been thinking of who and what might be up in that story, and I had got myself into a perfect

fever. I wanted to go to Clara's room, but was afraid of disturbing her. I thought though that I would try and find out if she were asleep, and if not I might venture in. I opened my door and looked out, and glancing up the hall, saw that the door at the foot of the upper stairs was open. I had before thought that it was left open at night. Well, frightened as I was, I couldn't help creeping along up the hall towards that door. I trembled lest some of them should hear me as I passed their doors, but all was still. But as I came near the stairs I heard a whisper from the upper story. I stopped and listened, for I dared not go a step nearer, and I dared not at first retreat. It seemed to be some one whispering to himself, for there was only one voice, and no answer. It was an awful whisper, sharp and as though the person wanted to be heard at a distance, but deep-toned, too. And, Dode, it said as plain as plain could be, 'I will kill them! I will kill them!'"

"Well, what did you do?" I asked.

"I crept back to Clara's chamber and went in," Bessie said. "She was awake, and I told her the whole story. But you know Clara is odd, though she is splendid. Her theory is that we should never try to find out what people try to keep from us, unless it is more our business than theirs. So of course she only cautioned me to go no more beyond our own hall, and to try to think nothing of the matter. She was good, though, and let me lock her door and get into bed with her, and when she found that I was really shaking with fear, she invented all sorts of plausible explanations to soothe me. Clara is an angel; but the plain fact is, Dode, I am afraid."

I considered. I really was a little impressed by Bessie's story. I had noticed some trifling things which made me think that our host and hostess had trouble on their minds, though I did not doubt their honesty.

"What do you think, Dode?" Bessie asked, after waiting a while.

"I think I don't know anything about the matter," I said. "Of course we can't pry into their affairs. The best thing to do is to keep quiet, have as good a time as we can, and fasten ourselves into our rooms when we go to bed. If you get frightened in the night, just knock on the wall between your room and mine, and Frank will go to see what is the matter."

Bessie sighed and remained silent; and at that moment Miss Marvale rose with a languid grace and sauntered towards the house,

smiling up at us as she caught sight of us in the window.

"Did you ever see such a graceful creature?" said Bessie, with an adoring fondness in her face as she gazed at her friend.

There was no denying that Clara Marvale was graceful. She was not very handsome, though she had handsome moods. Her eyes were good, gray and clear, her hair was more than good, golden-brown and abundant, and her features were well-proportioned; but her complexion was sallow, and her expression melancholy. I should have said that she had a magnificent form if I hadn't known that women make themselves up so unscrupulously that there is no knowing how much of them is nature and how much art.

Miss Marvale was looking positively handsome since we came into the country. The air seemed to have freshened and brightened her, and she had sometimes quite a bloom. She was merry too, at times, and showed a delightful little caprice which was very becoming to her. She came into the room smiling, and dropping down her long white skirts to trail on the floor. She wore white almost altogether.

"I know what Bessie has been telling you," she said. "Poor little sleep-walker! She has imagination enough to people the whole house with ghosts and felons."

"Dode thinks there's something in it, and that we'd better lock our doors at night," said Bessie, stoutly.

Clara Marvale looked at me in surprise, and I fairly blushed before her clear, courageous eyes.

"I don't believe there is anything out of the way," I said. "But we needn't quite scout poor Bessie. It wouldn't hurt us to take a little precaution, in case there should happen to be a person of doubtful character in the house."

"Why, there's a pair of you!" she laughed, and going before the glass, began to trim herself up with May-weed which she had brought in. I heard a step on the stair, and Mr. Alford came in. He was looking fresh and sweet as though he had slept and dreamed beautiful dreams. He nodded to Bessie and me, but only glanced at Miss Marvale who was too busy with her decorations to attend to him. I thought that there was a little coldness between them, though they were polite. They very seldom spoke together, or looked at each other, she taking me for escort and crony when she did not choose to be alone,

and he petting Bessie as if she had been a baby.

Bessie went to him now, and, taking him into the very furthest corner of the room, began to tell him the same story she had told me. Miss Marvale turned from the glass and came smilingly toward my window, with her graceful head crowned with a tiara of the yellow and white flowers. She only smiled, but did not speak as she took a seat beside me.

"Have you ever met Mr. Alford much?" I asked her.

She looked out the window as she replied carelessly:

"Not a great deal."

"Wasn't he at the coast when you were there last summer?" I went on, for the first time feeling curious about the matter.

"Yes; but we did not get very well acquainted. We are both too retiring, and too proud to become intimate in less than ten or twenty years, if ever."

"But you would suit each other admirably," I said.

"Do you think so?" asked Miss Marvale, with more iciness of manner than she often showed to me.

I said no more, but kept up a deuce of a thinking as I sat watching her carelessly pull flower by flower away from her coronet and toss it from the window. I began to recollect half-forgotten remarks which I had heard, and to put them together. Some one had said that Mr. Alford had seemed pleased with Miss Marvale the summer before, and that for a while they had appeared to be on the best of terms. Suddenly a coldness sprung up between them, and had continued till they returned to the city, where the acquaintance had never been renewed.

"I wonder if they really cared for each other!" I thought, glancing at Mr. Alford. Bessie was talking busily to him, but he was looking at Miss Marvale with a steady and earnest gaze. If she was aware of his look, she did not show any consciousness, but merely sat there with her head leaning on her hand, and her eyes fixed dreamily on the trees that rustled in the summer breeze.

Frank came in and stirred us up with an account of the trout he had caught. We all went out to look at them as they lay in the shadow on the cool, green grass, their speckled sides glistening like jewels. We were standing at the southern end of the house, and I saw Mr. Alford glance up to the upper win-

dows. Following his glance I noticed now for the first time that the upper blinds were closed, and looking up as I did, I could see that there were what appeared to be wooden shutters inside. The roof was slanting, and two skylights stood open.

Mr. Alford smiled as he saw me looking.

"This little witch has set us all fancying ourselves in giant Fi-fu-fum's castle."

"O Bessie! have you been telling that story again?" exclaimed Miss Marvale, looking reproachfully at her friend.

"Certainly!" said Bessie, leaning on Mr. Alford's arm. "I had no idea of keeping my terrors to myself; and, Clara, they all think more of it than you did. When I scream out in the night I want them to know what is the matter, and if they only half hear me, I don't want them to turn over and go sleep, but to start up and think 'that's Bessie being carried off by a burglar or a ghost.'"

"You must be very careful not to let the family suspect that you think of such things," Miss Marvale said, gravely. "It would be a very poor requital of their courtesy."

"You have no fear, then?" Mr. Alford said, addressing her for the first time that day.

"No!" she answered, quietly, looking up to meet his eyes for an instant.

I was struck by the expression of their faces. I can only describe it by saying that it was at once inquiring and guarded. The tone and manner of both were quiet and gentle, even a little softened, but whether it was the self-control which veils dislike with a mantle of courtesy, which is all the more scrupulously considerate because it has to be considered, or whether it was that calm mask which covers deep and troubled love, I could not tell. I began to suspect that there was more between these two than we had dreamed of, and that Mr. Alford's joining our party had not been so accidental after all.

I don't like to pry into other people's affairs, but I couldn't help watching them after that. I got very little for my pains, except that I saw they guardedly watched each other. It was clear that they had been better friends, and had had some misunderstanding, and were now in doubt as to their mutual feelings, not knowing whether they were friends or not, both too proud to make an advance, yet desirous to appear as though their intercourse were entirely friendly. It fretted me to see, for I well knew how nearly impossible it is for two such persons to reconcile a difference,

their virtues as well as their faults uniting to form a barrier.

Weeks passed away in that manner. We rode, drove, sang, walked, boated, read, wrote, lounged and slept, and to-day was as yesterday, and mid-August had come.

Perhaps there was a little change though. Miss Marvale was not so light as she had been, and Mr. Alford was a trifle fretful and irritable. He really snapped me up quite unceremoniously several times. But Miss Marvale invariably treated me with a compensating sweetness afterwards. Not but I could fight my own battles, and did, but her silent championship was a far greater punishment for him.

He had disputed some point of law with me one day at dinner, and I had been obliged to give up, as he was right. But it fretted me, not that I cared for the question, or shrunk from being corrected by a lawyer ten years older than myself; but he had taken such a high tone that I felt my temper start. We were about rising from the table when he delivered his dictum with a manner of unbearable haughtiness.

"Come, Doro," said Miss Marvale, putting her hand on my arm. "Let's go out under the trees."

Her face was slightly pale, I noticed, and there was an expression of pain in her voice.

I glanced back and saw Mr. Alford's eyes following us with a flashing glance, his face burning with a crimson flush and his form drawn to its full height.

That evening at tea he announced that he should return to the city the next day.

Bessie exclaimed and so did Frank, but Miss Marvale said not a word, only went on with her supper and never looked up. I saw him look at her and color at the apparent indifference she displayed. But she didn't eat another mouthful of supper, though she trifled with her tea-spoon, and broke her cake to crumbs.

After tea she went up stairs to her room, and stayed there an hour. When she came down we were all out in the moonlight, walking up and down, Bessie on Mr. Alford's arm, Frank and I with our cigars.

"Clara," Bessie called out, "come and help me coax Mr. Alford to stay another week. Frank says that if he will stay a week longer we might shorten our stay a week and so go all together."

Clara Marvale sauntered slowly down the

walk, the moonlight full and white on her face and dress.

"I could not hope to succeed where you fail," she said, carelessly, pausing as she met the two. "Besides, I don't see why we should interpose with Mr. Alford's business. If he prefers going immediately, I should not ask him to stay."

She only glanced at him, but he looked intently at her while she spoke, and looked after her as she walked on to where I stood. She put her hand on my arm and leaned heavily for a moment, some tremor shaking her from head to foot. Frank went to talk to the others. We heard him say:

"Well, have you concluded to stay, Mr. Alford?"

"I shall certainly go," was the abrupt reply.

"I wonder why he came!" said Miss Marvale, passionately, speaking more to herself than to me.

"I think he came to establish a friendship with you," I said, boldly.

"You mistake, Dode," she answered. "Let me tell you, and you will perceive how wrong you are. I met him last summer at the coast, and we used to see a good deal of each other. We have much in common, and our intercourse was very pleasant. But gossips never will let people alone, and they began to joke as though we were lovers. Of course that disgusted him and me, and we became a little less free. He didn't want such a story to go, and I wasn't going to try to entangle the man, so we drifted apart. A coldness grew up, and we scarcely spoke when we met. I think he came here this summer to let me see that he doesn't care anything about me. He might have spared himself the trouble, for it is a matter of indifference to me whether he cares or not."

Ending, she drew her hand from my arm, and before I had time for a word, went to meet Bessie and Mr. Alford who were coming towards us.

"Since you will be going so early in the morning I may as well say good-by to-night," she said. "I am so sleepy I really must go to bed directly. Good-by. I wish you a pleasant journey."

"Thank you!" he replied, as haughtily, and they parted without another word. She swept up the walk and disappeared into the house, and he stood where she had left him, not even looking after her.

There was an awkward silence for a mo-

ment, then Mr. Alford proposed that we should all retire, since we were to see him off at six the next morning. But I saw that after we had gone up stairs he went out again, and from the parlor window I heard his step pacing to and fro in the gardens. I wondered if Miss Marvale heard it too. It was one o'clock when he came in and went up to his room. Then I dropped asleep.

How long I had slept I know not, but I was awaked by a loud scream that was repeated before I was out of bed. There was a confusion of sounds as I opened our door, Mr. and Miss Markham were coming out of their rooms, the man Jacob was looking from his, and Mr. Alford, fully dressed, was standing in the hall.

"What is it?" he asked, for there was silence.

"Where is he?" cried Mr. Markham, running down the hall with a light, his gray hair streaming back, his face full of affright. "My God!" he cried, seeing Miss Marvale's door open.

Mr. Alford was at his side in an instant, and Frank and I followed them into the room.

The sight we saw was one calculated to justify the old man's exclamation. Miss Marvale, in her night-dress, with her hair streaming down her shoulders, was standing against the opposite wall of the room, her face perfectly white, her hands clasped on her bosom, and her eyes riveted in a gaze of terror on a man who, half-crouching, was slowly approaching her, moving softly and warily as a cat, watching her every motion, ready to intercept any step of flight.

This man was evidently of tall and powerful frame, his hair was long, black and shaggy, and his clothes were in rags. As he heard our steps in the door, he straightened himself up, and turned his face for a backward glance. That one look was enough. The wolfish eyes, the haggard and working face, could only belong to a maniac. This glance was but momentary, for, as we all rushed towards him, he gave a cry and sprang to grasp Miss Marvale.

"I'll finish her!" he cried, with a fiendish laugh.

There wasn't a word said among us, but as he grasped her, four men were upon him, tearing his hands away from the white throat they had grasped, claspings his own throat with a strong grip, tugging at his waist, tugging at his legs. It took all that we could do, and even then Jacob had added his strength

to that of my fingers on the madman's wind-pipe before he let go his hold. They had a rope and bound him hand and foot, and carried him howling like a demon away. But as I paused to take breath, after letting go my hold, I saw a picture suggestive rather of heaven than hell. Miss Marvale was leaning still against the wall, catching her breath after that half strangling, and standing before her was Mr. Alford, glowing, hesitating.

"O Winthrope!" she said, stretching her hands out to him.

I heard the full, deep breath he gave as he took a step and gathered her closely to his heart, and then I knew that Winthrope Alford loved that woman as he loved his life.

In a few minutes Bessie ventured to open her door and put a white face out. I was about to inform her that there was no hurry whatever for her going to her friend, when I heard Mr. Alford's voice at my elbow.

"Bessie, you had better go in and stay with Miss Marvale," he said. "And don't be frightened, child. There is no more danger."

How sweet his voice sounded! and what happiness radiated from his face!

There was no more sleep for any of us that night. After a while we all gathered in the parlor, Miss Marvale, dressed and blushing, seated on a sofa with Mr. Alford beside her, and glancing at her every movement with his fond and shining eyes. Bessie had me on one side and Frank on the other, and even then was not sure she mightn't be carried off. Presently Miss Markham came in, and seated herself facing us all, the gray light of early morning shining in her pale face.

"We owe you a full explanation," she began, "and an humble apology also. I will make both as short as I can. The man you saw to-night is my brother's only son. He has been crazy off and on for years, and his father hated to send him to an asylum. We thought that we could keep him here just as well, and this is the first time he ever broke

out. No one knows about him, and we didn't want them to know. Poor John always said that if people knew he had crazy fits they would never trust him. When he has been so the people at Dover have thought that he was away at sea. It wasn't right to take any one into the house, but we had made up our minds that John must go to an asylum, and my brother couldn't well afford to send him without doing something to increase his income. I hope you won't think hard of us. We feel badly enough. My brother and Jacob are going to take him away this morning."

Of course we pitied, and assured her, and offered to do anything in our power to help them. Mr. Alford was so happy he was on the point of telling the distressed lady that the young man's being a maniac had been a most fortunate circumstance for him, when he was interrupted by the sound of their bringing the poor fellow down.

The rest of us went to the window to see them get him into the carriage, but Miss Marvale hung back, covering her eyes from the sight, and her lover, leaning towards her, was whispering something that changed her pallor to blushes.

I had thought that I knew how delightful Winthrope Alford could be; but I had not dreamed. He seemed to be bewitched by his happiness, and effervesced in all sorts of ways. There was no going off by themselves morning, noon and night by these lovers, no spoony actions whatever, though they used to take their quiet hour together every evening; they were more social and charming than ever before. Our stately gentleman got up all sorts of diversions, played all sorts of jokes, sparkled unceasingly with wit and fun. I never was more sorry in my life to leave a place than I was to leave Mr. Markham's castle.

That nocturnal adventure solved in my mind one doubt besides that concerning these lovers' love; I am fully convinced now that Miss Marvale's superb form is her own!

A WINTER OF MY LIFE.

MRS. L F W

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A WINTER OF MY LIFE.

BY MRS. L. F. W.

"THOMAS HOWARD, will you have the kindness to get off that trunk, and let me finish my packing?" I was fast losing the small stock of patience I possessed, and of course seeing it, my young torment of a brother redoubled his amiable efforts to effect a complete overthrow of my self-possession.

"No, Miss Spitfire; I intend to sit here until you calm down and speak more respectfully. So sit down in the rocking-chair and take it easy, for very likely I shall be obliged to sit here an hour yet. Come and sit here too, Nellie, for fear Miss Spitfire gets rampageous and tries to push me off."

Thus admonished, Miss Nellie proceeded to the assistance of her brother, and there the two torments sat and laughed immoderately at my discomfiture.

"Count twenty before you speak," began Tom; but before he had time to finish his sentence, he found himself on his way to the door, to be forcibly ejected by the aforesaid Spitfire. Nellie soon followed in the same uncereemonious manner, and I had the door locked upon them, and once more had the field to myself. They kept up the warfare for awhile outside the door, but failing to produce an effect, they soon decamped.

I soon had my small wardrobe nicely packed away in my trunk, and getting a blank card, wrote as neatly as I could upon it, "Miss Annie Howard, Philadelphia, Pa.," and now that my trunk is at last locked, strapped and labelled, I may as well state the circumstances which led to that occurrence.

My father lived about twelve miles from Boston, and was in easy circumstances; and as our tastes were not extravagant, we lived very comfortably. I was just nineteen that fall, and as my brother and sister were some years younger than myself, I sometimes felt rather the want of a companion; so, when a week before I received a note from my father's only sister, Mrs. Davis, who resided in Philadelphia, inviting me to pass the winter with her, I eagerly jumped at the chance for a change of scene. I had seen very little of the world, I had no taste for conventionalities, so my parents concluded that a visit to my aunt, who was quite a woman of the world, would be a very good experience for me. They knew there was no danger of my being dazzled by fashion and gayety, for I possessed a matter-of-fact mind, and was rather too much inclined to disregard the world's opinion of my actions.

I had not seen my aunt since my childhood, and I remembered her as a handsome, pleasant lady, who was very kind to me, and I knew I should like her. I was not quite so sanguine about her two daughters. The eldest, Clara, was two years my senior, and I recollected how sullen and spiteful she was sometimes when we played together. I never forgot the time when I found my favorite wax doll with her pretty red cheeks dug into with the scissors, after one of our childish quarrels. Her younger sister, Maggie, was about sixteen, and I knew nothing of her, except from her photograph, which looked bright and pretty, but didn't strike me as being a very lovable face.

I sat down on my trunk in the twilight, and began to feel a little homesickness stealing over me, as I thought how long it would be before I should be in my little room again. I almost wished I had not decided to go, and I wondered how I could have imagined that any place could be so pleasant to me as our little, cosy sitting-room, when we were all together. The supper bell rang, putting a summary end to my repinings; and giving a few touches to my hair, and straightening my collar, I descended to the supper-room.

My father, as I entered and took my accus-

tomed place at the table, said, "I find, Annie, that I can take you on to Philadelphia myself, and I have got our tickets. We shall have to leave home at seven to-morrow morning, so don't oversleep yourself, little lazy girl."

We were unusually quiet at supper that evening; they all seemed a little homesick at the idea of my leaving them, for it was an unusual thing to have our little circle broken into.

"You must sing us some of your songs, Annie," said my mother, after we had drawn around the cheerful fire in the sitting-room. Thus we passed the last evening we were to be together, and at an early hour we separated for the night.

At half past eight o'clock the next morning, my father and I were sitting side by side in the cars; and now that the leave-takings were fairly over I felt relieved, and quite enjoyed the prospect of the little journey.

I found myself eagerly scanning the faces of the occupants of the car, and at last my attention was attracted to a young woman who sat in front of us. She had the good-natured, shrewd face that often characterizes a smart, Yankee country-girl, and I really felt anxious to hear her talk, for I felt that her conversation would be spicy. She was expecting her uncle to join her at the next station, and she informed the conductor of the fact whenever he passed, and desired him to be on the lookout to give him the necessary assistance, as he was somewhat lame. Soon we reached the little town of A—, and the expected uncle duly arrived, and was welcomed by his affectionate relative by a loud smack, that was heard from one end of the car to the other.

"Now, uncle, you know that you've got to stay till Christmas with us."

"Not quite so long as that, I guess, but we'll see. Had a good time down to Boston?"

"I tell you, I've had lots of experience. Miss Smith, she and her husband couldn't do enough for me."

"Showed you the sights, I s'pose?"

"I rather think they did. Yesterday, (here she raised her voice, to impress the occupants of the seats in her vicinity) they took me to ride in a barouche and two black horses, the most elegant carriage I ever did see. It cost six dollars, and we wasn't gone over two hours. I offered to pay my part, but Miss Smith she wouldn't hear of it. By the way, how many trunks have you got?"

"One, of course. I aint one of your fash-

ionable people that set the world on fire when they travel. What do you want to know for?"

"Why, you see they allow you to take two; and if I put mine in with yours, I shan't have to pay nothing. I aint one that keeps their eyes shut."

I soon got tired of this conversation, and had recourse to the supply of reading material I had furnished myself with; and with that and the luncheon we carried, I passed away the time very comfortably, until we reached New York. We went at once to a hotel and passed the night, and the next morning my father took me all over the city, which, as I had never been there before, afforded me much enjoyment.

We reached Philadelphia soon after dark, and immediately took a carriage for my aunt's house. My heart beat pretty fast as we stopped before a large house on Walnut street. A man servant opened the door into a large and brilliantly-lighted hall, and told us to enter the drawing-room. I was quite dazzled by the splendor, so much finer than I had imagined, and was so dizzy I could see but indistinctly a group seated before a crackling open fire. A lady that I knew was my aunt, came forward, and kissed my father and me. She was so genial, and welcomed us so kindly, that I began to feel more comfortable, and turned to see my new cousins who came towards me. That tall, graceful woman I knew was Clara; but how beautiful she was! although that proud curl of the short upper lip told how little there could be in common between us. While I was making this comment, I felt a pair of affectionate arms about my waist, and a warm kiss announced my Cousin Maggie's presence. She was pretty, not so handsome as Clara, but much more lovable and sweet.

There was still another form that had formed the group at the fireside—a tall, handsome young man. "Signor Ruffini," said my aunt. I couldn't tell why I felt myself shrink from him; but I felt an inward shudder when I saw his handsome black eyes look at me. I thought, too, my aunt felt uncomfortable as he approached her—but after all I might be mistaken.

At supper time, Signor Ruffini sat opposite to me, by the side of my Cousin Clara, to whom he paid the most devoted attention. I saw at once that he was her lover, and that she was not averse to his devotion. I still saw the look of uneasiness in my aunt's face.

Supper was over at last; it seemed an age, for everything was new to me, and I had not been accustomed to such splendor. When bedtime came, Maggie said to me:

"Cousin Annie, if you have no objections I am going to be your bedfellow. I hate to sleep alone, and Clara wont let me sleep with her."

"Nothing would give me so much pleasure. I always roomed with my little sister Nellie at home, and I should feel quite lost to be alone in one of these great rooms."

"You look as if you needed a good night's rest, my dear, and you had better go at once to your room. You know you are to be my daughter for the present, and I must look after you," said my aunt, kindly.

Clara bade me a cool but polite good-night, and Signor Ruffini made a low bow, and gave me another look from his large, dark eyes, as I passed him to bid my father good-night.

Maggie led me, clasping my waist tight, up the broad, high stairs, and across a large hall from which rooms opened on each side.

"This is mamma's room," she said, as we passed a large and beautifully-furnished apartment; "and this smaller one next to it is ours; you see it opens into hers. Do you think it pretty?"

I did think it pretty, too pretty for me. It seemed like the rooms I had read about in fairy tales. The soft velvet carpet was blue, or mostly blue, and so were the large drapery curtains, that hung in heavy folds before the high windows, and the frescoed walls and ceiling harmonized with all. Pictures hung on the walls, and statuettes were arranged artistically about the room. But before I could answer Maggie's question, she was off on another topic; and I discovered that I shouldn't be homesick as far as it was in her power to entertain me.

"You can't think, Annie, how I have longed for you to come, to have somebody to talk to."

"Is it possible you have been in such a desperate condition?"

"You needn't quiz me like that, miss. Mamma says I am a chatterbox, and Clara says I am—well, everything that is bad. But the truth is, Annie, she thinks I am a little too sharp. I confess I do know a thing or two more than she thinks I do."

"I suppose you use a younger sister's prerogative, and give her occasionally the benefit of your maturer experience."

"Now look here, Annie, if you come down

on me like that, I won't tell you a single thing I was going to."

"I didn't mean to 'come down' on you, dear Maggie, and I should be very sorry to lose the confidence you are so ready to place in me; but we shall neither of us get to bed at this rate."

At this reminder, Maggie hastened her disrobing in true school-girl fashion; and as she stood with her long, flaxen hair let down over her white shoulders, I found her a very pretty picture. That bright, sunny face of sixteen pleased me much more than Clara's proud beauty.

"You noticed Signor Ruffini, Annie?"

"Certainly."

"What did you think of him?"

I was rather staggered by the sudden question, and for a moment hesitated; I saw too, that she noticed my hesitation.

"I thought him very gentlemanly."

"Yes, he is that; but I know something about him that they don't think I do. You must know that he is engaged to Clara, only since about a week though. I know that mamma isn't pleased at it, for I have caught her lately crying by herself; and as for me, I hate him!"

"But Clara likes him, doesn't she?"

"I presume so. You know he is a marquis, and they say he is immensely rich."

"I don't think you ought to have told me all this, Maggie. Not that I shall repeat it, but your mother might not like to have me know it."

"She will not care. Besides, I noticed how pale you turned whenever he looked at you."

She was pretty shrewd for a girl of sixteen, much more so than I was myself.

"There is one thing, Annie, I am going to tell you, that I haven't yet told even to mamma, for I thought it might trouble her. One afternoon, as I was coming home from the Germania rehearsal with a lot of the girls, it was just about dusk, and we were hurrying along to get home before dark, a man and woman walked in front of us for a few squares, and the man was the marquis. I don't know who the lady was, but she was dressed very much, and was handsome, although she looked very unhappy. He looked as if he wanted to get away from her, but couldn't, and she acted as if she were determined to tell him something. They walked so fast that I could only catch a few sentences; but I heard him say, 'If you don't leave me I will give you up to the police as a

vagrant.' And she got very angry, and said, 'As true as God made me, if you marry that girl, I will—' We had to turn into another street, and so I couldn't hear any more; but I thought that pretty strange, don't you?"

"Perhaps you were mistaken. It might not have been the marquis."

"O, yes it was! The girls all recognized him at once. You see every one has been crazy after him, and he is known everywhere."

"I wouldn't trouble myself any more about it. I must say I don't see anything very dreadful in it. Perhaps the poor woman was insane. At any rate, let us go to bed now, for I feel very tired."

"Good-night, my dear old cousin," said Maggie, as she kissed and hugged me once more, and then cuddled down for the night.

She was soon asleep; but I lay awake, thinking of all she had been telling me. Was it my duty to tell my aunt what Maggie had heard? I could not tell, and at last came to the conclusion that I would wait a little longer. Having arrived at this conviction I fell asleep, and slept soundly until we were roused by the maid coming in to open the shutters.

I hurried up and dressed as quickly as possible, for I wanted to see my father as much as I could that day, as he was to leave in the afternoon for home. I found him already walking up and down the lower hall. "Here you are at last. You have grown so fashionable already that you keep me waiting half an hour for you to finish your toilet." I took his arm and walked with him. I longed to ask him to take me back with him, but I knew it would be too foolish, and I determined to brave it out. I really enjoyed the breakfast very much, for Signor Ruffini was not there, and my aunt was very happy and entertaining. I thought her one of the most fascinating persons I had ever seen, and began to think that between her and Maggie I could pass the winter very pleasantly.

After breakfast Maggie went to school, and my aunt took my father and me to drive to Fairmount. On our way back, we met the marquis and Clara driving in a very showy carriage. I saw again the anxious expression on my aunt's face.

That evening, after my father had gone, I felt pretty lonely, and was quite relieved when my aunt asked the marquis to sing; for I was passionately fond of music, and had devoted much time to the cultivation of my voice, which was the only talent I possessed. The

marquis seated himself at the piano, and began to sing in one of the most beautiful tenors I had ever heard. In an instant all my dislike of him vanished. Listening to that rich voice I thought of nothing else. After that he sang many things, mostly from my favorite composers, and I enjoyed the evening as I had seldom enjoyed myself. Long after I had gone to bed, the rich tones of his voice rang through my mind, and I longed to hear more of them.

A few days after, as I was coming out of the music-room after practising, I met Signor Ruffini, and he said, "Is it asking too great a favor if I request you to play a few accompaniments for me?"

"With the greatest pleasure," I replied, and played for him an Italian ballad that he selected. After thanking me for my assistance, he said:

"But I know you sing. Will you give me the pleasure of hearing you in return?"

"Certainly," I replied; and selecting "Ah, Mon Fils" from "Le Prophete," began at once. I made it a rule never to make people urge me to sing, for music was too sacred to me to trifle with it. He seemed to like my singing very much, and said many complimentary things about my voice, that I didn't care to hear. Next I sang "The Shadow Song" from "Dinorah;" and while I was singing it, I noticed that the marquis drew nearer and nearer to me, and I even felt him lean against me. As I concluded the song, he put his arm around me, and looking into my face with his burning black eyes, kissed me on the lips before I had time to prevent him.

I pushed him from me with my whole strength, and starting up, exclaimed, "Sir, you have no honor, to take advantage of me in this manner!"

"My dear young lady, don't, pray don't excite yourself thus. We Italians think nothing at all of this way of expressing our approbation."

"I don't care whether it is Italian or Hebrew! But if it ever happens again, I will inform my aunt of your conduct!"

"Does it not occur to you that your aunt may inquire how you happened to be *tete-a-tete* with me for half an hour?"

He had a horrid insinuating smile on his face, and I saw at once that my ignorance of conventionalities had led me to take an important step. I turned without a word and left the room, resolving inwardly, that if I

ever got caught in such a situation again, it should not be through my fault. I said nothing of this to my aunt; perhaps I ought to have done so, but I felt myself partly to blame for giving the marquis an opportunity to surprise me in such a manner. Every time I met him now, he gave me a glance that made me shudder, and I grew more and more afraid of him.

One day, Maggie came bounding into our room, as I sat writing a letter home, and throwing her arms about my neck in her usual affectionate manner, began:

"What do you think, Nan?"

"I think you a very rough young lady; for you have blotted my letter, and split over my box of pens."

"How dreadfully witty you are growing. I shall get almost as brilliant myself, if I associate with you much longer. The truth is, that mamma is going to give a party next Wednesday; and isn't that fun? Clara will wear pink, I blue, and you white; because mamma says white will look beautifully with your red cheeks."

"I wear white? I have no white dress."

"I know that. You are to put on your things this minute, and go with me to Madame Doree's to be measured. So come along, or the carriage will be at the door before you are half ready."

I had been to parties enough at home, but never to such an elegant affair as this would be, and I felt almost as much excited about it as Maggie herself. The fact of going to such a stylish dressmaker, too, quite overpowered my unsophisticated mind; for at home, we always had the dressmaker come to the house and fit our dresses. As soon as we reached Madame Doree's, Maggie pulled me up to an elegantly-dressed lady, who was evidently the head dressmaker, and addressing her as "Miss Morris," desired her to fit me. "And be sure you do justice to her pretty figure," she added; "there are not many bones in her composition."

Miss Morris bestowed a patronizing smile on the audacious Maggie, and went to work. She felt the responsibility of her position to such an alarming extent, that she had quite the air of the captive Zenobia when she walked in Aurelian's triumph; and I felt as if I had no business to walk the earth, much less to have a dress fitted by that majestic creature. If I found her so superior, imagine my feelings when a second being appeared, before whom Miss Morris's splendor faded to insignificance.

nificance. I heard the rustle of "fine linen" (as somebody or other says), and raising my eyes, was transfixed by the beautiful vision. Such a figure! Not a wrinkle to be seen in the fitting! It was impossible to tell where the flesh left off, and where the cotton began! And then that train! To my surprise, a young lady had the courage to approach her, and addressing her as "*Madame Doree*," asked her advice about the trimming of a rich moire antique that was in the process of making. Madame Doree proposed velvet of the same shade, and rich white Cluny lace.

"And then the gold buttons that I had last year, will they look well with it?"

"O, no indeed! They are not stylish enough. You have worn them through one season!"

"I know it; but my husband says he can't afford to get me new ones."

"Husbands always say so! If you take him in a good mood, I guess you can get them. If worst comes to worst, go and get them, and he won't know anything about it until the bill comes in."

"I am determined to have them one way or another. How is it about the lace?"

I had heard and seen enough to set me wondering why my parents had wanted me to learn the *conventionalities of fashion*, if it was to lead to this! It made my heart ache to think of that vain, heartless woman plotting and contriving to get money from her husband that he said he did not have to give her! Perhaps he had to work hard to make both ends meet, and—but my dress was fitted, and I was at liberty to return home.

Wednesday evening arrived, and I was putting the finishing touches to my toilet, when in Maggie rushed, saying, "You must come down this minute. They are beginning to come, and mamma wants you to come down to her."

I felt rather "shaky," as Maggie expressed it, at the ordeal before me, and still I was burning with excitement at the thought of the novelty of the scene. We entered the lower hall by a side passage, and as we were about to enter the drawing-room, we came in contact with a gentleman who was turning the corner in a rapid manner. My lace dress caught in a button of his coat, and as he apologized, with a slight German accent, I looked up at his face. Such a *frank, open face* I thought I had never seen; and his large blue eyes were almost too handsome for a man. If the character of his face had not been so

manly, they would have given an effeminate expression to his countenance. The whole face and head were almost ideal! As he left us, Maggie clutched my arm and whispered, "That is Dr. Hoffman. Isn't he lovely? If I ever marry, it shall be he, or I will perish in the attempt!"

"Do you flatter yourself that such an intellectual man as he looks to be, would fall in love with a rattlebrains like you?"

"I presume not. I shall introduce him to my Cousin Annie, and he will succumb at once to her ponderous intellect."

At that moment the Germania Band struck up one of Strauss's waltzes, and we entered the drawing-room to see the dancers. The marquis and Clara whirled by us, and the marquis gave me an admiring glance from his disagreeable eyes. My aunt beckoned to us, and introduced me to a gentleman, whose name I did not hear. He asked me to waltz, and off we started. Dancing was my favorite amusement, and I danced first with one and then with another, until I felt quite tired, and stood fanning myself near a group of ladies, who soon made me the object of their remarks, as ladies are often kind enough to do. One young lady (she had evidently just come out, or else she would have had time to learn better, and wouldn't have been so disinterested,) ventured to remark on my neck and arms that were uncovered.

"Pretty!" sneered a fair-haired young lady, with very scraggy neck and arms, "she is altogether too fat to suit me! Dark as an Indian, and flaming red cheeks that look as if she had worked in a dairy all her life!"

"Nothing stylish about her," volunteered a third. "I wonder where Mrs. Davis could have picked her up. Her own daughters are so pretty, and have such elegant manners!"

I was about to withdraw from these flattering observations, when I was stopped by Signor Ruffini, who requested the pleasure of a waltz with me.

"I am too tired to dance," I said, shortly.

"Then perhaps after you are rested you will favor me?"

"I shall not dance again," I rudely replied, and turned away. I was vexed to think I must forego all further pleasure that evening on his account, and thought I would go into the library and read by myself awhile. I found no one there, and took down the first book I happened to lay my hand on, which was the *Iliad*. I opened to the *Siege of Troy*, and got so interested in it, and so indignant

over Achilles's treatment of my favorite hero Hector, that I didn't notice the door open and shut. I was recalled to myself by feeling both hands seized passionately. The marquis stood before me. His eyes glared like coals of fire, and his lips were white and trembling from the intensity of his passion.

"Miss Howard," he began, in a pleading voice, "give me but one glance from your melting dark eyes, and make me happy!"

"Signor Ruffini!" was all I could utter in my amazement.

"One loving look of your soft brown eyes would fill me with bliss! One smile from your rosy mouth make me your slave! And for a caress from your soft hand, I would—"

I didn't know to what extent his extravagant Italian nature would lead him, but I felt paralyzed with fear and disgust. I could not stir, and he still held my hands as in a vice. He seemed to take my silence for yielding.

"I love you as I never loved woman yet! I live only in your presence! A frown from you makes me happier than a smile from any other! Fly with me to my own sunny Italy, and there I will heap upon you every luxury that woman could desire! I swear by your ivory arm—" Here he pressed his burning lips passionately on my uncovered arm. That indignity brought back at once my self-control and my physical strength, and starting to my feet, I threw him off with the whole force I possessed.

"Go, base libertine," I cried, "before I publish to the world your cowardly treatment of a pure and unprotected girl! I recognized your false heart the moment I saw your detested face! Leave me, or I will expose your conduct to the public gaze!"

In an instant his whole demeanor underwent a sudden change. A perfectly diabolical expression took the place of his look of passionate pleading, and he hissed through his closed white teeth, "Miss Howard, I have shown you how an Italian can love! Take care that I don't have occasion to show you how an Italian can avenge an insult!"

I pointed to the door, and like a whipped hound, he sneaked out without looking at me again. I at once went to my room; but long before I reached there, a reaction had taken place in my feelings, and I burst into a violent passion of weeping. I seldom cried, but when I did it was uncontrollable. I couldn't cry in the pretty, romantic way young ladies cry in novels, when the tears drop gently down their

smooth cheeks. My cheeks always got hot and red, and so did my eyes, and I am afraid my nose didn't look very handsome either. Just before I reached my room, I again encountered Doctor Hoffman. I remembered that one of the servant girls was ill, and I presumed he had been to visit her. I was so provoked at being caught in such a degrading position by him, that my tears were arrested in a summary manner, and I rudely pushed by him without a word of recognition. I threw myself on my bed, and inwardly railed at myself for making such an exposition. To expose myself so before him, of all persons! The very one of all others I should wish to have a good opinion of me! And he looked at me so kindly, as if he would like to help me! That brought the tears again, and I sobbed until I felt better and calmer. After all, he looked so honorable and manly, that it was perhaps better he had surprised me than any of those fops down stairs. They would tell it as a good joke to their low acquaintances, and place me in a ridiculous light. Gradually I became composed enough to undress myself and go to bed, and resolved to place the marquis's character in its true light to my aunt, for her and Clara's sake, although I hated to give so much pain. Soon Maggie came to hunt me up, and of course was astonished to find me in bed; but I pleaded a severe headache, and persuaded her to leave me and excuse my absence to her mother.

The next morning passed without an opportunity presenting itself for me to speak with my aunt alone. She did not get up until shortly before lunch, and then, saying she must go out on business, left us. I felt excited and nervous, and thought I would steady my nerves by a good long walk, so I prepared to start out. I had gone but a few steps, when a close carriage drove up to the sidewalk, and the despicable face of the marquis presented itself. He called after me as I was hurrying on.

"Miss Howard, I must speak with you. Your aunt is taken ill, fainted in a shop; and in recovering her consciousness sent me for you, as she says you have more self-control than her daughters. Will you come with me?"

I thought only of my kind, good aunt, and without a word, got into the carriage with the man I hated above all others. He had the consideration to seat himself opposite to me, in the further corner of the carriage.

Not a word was spoken by either of us, and

as we passed the part of the city I was acquainted with, by all the shops I knew, I grew suddenly uneasy. A horrible suspicion seized me. He means to carry me off by main force. It is the time that the trains leave for New York. A cold perspiration broke out over me. I looked at him, and the satanic expression of his features told me that he divined my thoughts. I sprang to the window to call for help, but he put his hand before my mouth, and said, while my heart sank within me, "It is of no use for you to scream for help. When I tell them I am taking my maniac wife to an asylum, they will not pay much heed to your ravings. Who can recognize you in the city? You know no one."

It was too true. I was in his power. The more I struggled, the more probable would his assertion appear. What could I do? I could only hope and pray for aid. The carriage kept on, and stopped, at a depot that I recognized at once as the depot from which the Southern trains started. He meant to take me South. There, in that lawless state of society, he would find no opposition to his persecution of an unprotected girl. I determined to make an effort to attract sympathy, although I felt how hopeless was the task. As the marquis pulled me along to the train, I saw an old gentleman with a benevolent countenance, and as we passed, I clutched his arm, and cried:

"O sir, save me from this ruffian's power! If you have a daughter, by the love you bear her, save me from a dishonor worse than death!"

The old gentleman was moved at my appeal; but before he could reply, the marquis said to him, quietly, "Pray don't answer her, it only increases her ravings. It distresses me to have her expose herself thus before this crowd."

It seemed too horrible. I felt as if I were really going mad, and I hoped I was. I was hurried on, and put into a saloon of one of the cars. I threw myself on the seat in an agony of despair. O, how could I have believed that false-hearted villain? And yet his story seemed plausible. My dear, good aunt! why did I not tell her before what I knew of this libertine's character? Too late! too late! There was no deliverance from this horrible fate. Yes, there was though, one means of deliverance. Young girls had before now sought relief in death. If I could in no other way, I would dash my head

against the wall, or hold my breath until oblivion came. I grew calmer, and lay with my face in my hands. By this time we had gone some distance by Wilmington, and were rapidly approaching Southern land. I still kept my face covered, for I could not meet that hated face before me. I felt it approach me, and heard those tones that made the blood turn to ice in my veins:

"I am glad to see you resigning yourself to your fate, my dearest," he said. "Only be submissive, and you will find me as tender as you could wish. In spite of your treatment of me, I love you to distraction. Tell me that you will try to love me!"

"Love you?" I cried. "I hate you! I hate you with the whole force of my nature! And I will never, never yield to your vile desires!"

"Gently, gently, fair one," he said. "I think you will find occasion to change your mind. If you speak so loud, the passengers will think my charge is getting unmanageable. So cool off, my pretty one, for you see it is of no use."

It was of no use, I knew; but what could a desperate girl do? We had reached Baltimore, and the horses were taking our train through the city to the depot. I had long since given up all hopes of escape. We stopped at the depot. Suddenly the door of the saloon in which I was confined was thrust open, and the stalwart form of a policeman entered. Even then I did not guess what was to happen. The marquis changed color, turned ashy pale, as the policeman, putting his hand on his shoulder, said, "You are my prisoner."

He recovered himself in an instant, and quick as thought drew a pistol from his breast, but the officer caught his hand. I heard a report, and saw the marquis stagger and fall heavily to the ground, blood oozing from a wound in the temple. I must have fainted from terror and exhaustion; and when I recovered consciousness, I found myself lying on a sofa in the depot, and many persons about me. A gentleman whom I found to be the chief of police, afforded me every attention, and when I was able to remember what had occurred, communicated to me the following intelligence:

He had received a telegram from Philadelphia, with orders to arrest a gentleman on board that train, who was taking his wife to an insane asylum. The telegram had come about twenty minutes before the arrival of the train. The marquis, baffled in his efforts,

took his own life, rather than submit to the disgrace that would ensue. I was placed on board the return train to Philadelphia, and passed over the road where I had experienced such misery but a few hours before.

It was late in the evening when we entered the Philadelphia depot. As I left the cars I was received into my aunt's arms. Behind her stood Dr. Hoffman. I soon was told the following story: When my aunt returned from her drive, shortly after my disappearance, she found me out; but as it was my custom to walk every day, she thought nothing of it. In a few moments Dr. Hoffman was announced, and requested to see her on pressing business. He told her that a few moments before, he had met a carriage containing the marquis, and a lady that he thought resembled me, but that he did not obtain a full view of her face—that his suspicions were aroused by hearing the marquis say, the evening before, that he was about to leave the city on important business, and should be gone some time—that he had known the marquis in Europe, where he had borne a different name, and had known him to be a desperate man. My aunt at once summoned the servants, and on questioning them, learned that one of them had seen me drive off in a carriage with the marquis. Dr. Hoffman started off in the direction the carriage had taken, and tracing it to the depot, learned that a gentleman answering to the marquis's description, had taken his wife to an insane asylum, and had left in the train a short time before. He at once telegraphed on to Baltimore to have the marquis arrested on his arrival there, and I was once again safe.

Two days afterwards my aunt came to me, and said that Dr. Hoffman was in the library, and wished to see me. As I left her she kissed me, and looked, as I thought, very

mysterious. I wondered at her unusual manner. As I entered the library, Dr. Hoffman came towards me, and taking both of my hands, not as the marquis had done before in that same room, but with a touching tenderness in his blue eyes, said, "Annie, I was so fortunate as to be the means of delivering you from a very unhappy situation. Will you do as much for me?"

I knew what he meant, his face was too full of love and tenderness for me to doubt his meaning, but I could find no words to answer.

"Will you be my wife," he added, "that I may love and care for you all my life?"

I could not answer him even then; but he knew I would be what he asked, and he drew me close up to his beating heart; and as I laid my head on his honest breast, I felt that there was my place in life. I put my arm around his neck, and drawing his face down to mine, whispered:

"I have loved you since the first moment I saw you, and I will try my best to be a good and loving wife."

My aunt had guessed how it would all end, and was as happy as if I had been her own child. Thus ended my winter in Philadelphia. I had seen the conventionalities of fashion, only to value more truly the natural impulses of the heart that are not glazed over by the ice of fashion.

Clara soon recovered from her disappointment, for she loved the marquis only for his position. Maggie is still the warm-hearted, bright girl she always was; and I have strong reasons to believe that her affections are placed on a younger brother of my husband's; for in her visits to me, whenever I enter a room unexpectedly, they both fly to opposite corners of the room, trying to look as if no earthly consideration would ever induce them to approach one step nearer to each other.

A BUNCH OF LETTERS.

Putnam, Kate

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A BUNCH OF LETTERS.

BY KATE PUTNAM.

WHEN Captain Charles Everard left the army "for good," he returned home the poorer by one arm, a loss, however, which he never for an instant dreamed of regretting. Having counted the cost at the outset, he was too brave to waste his time in looking back and wailing over the inevitable. Instead, he looked on the bright side, and rejoiced that the lost arm had so long been able to do good service; for the ball that took it off was fired in one of the closing battles of the war, and, what with the amputation fever and the tedious convalescence, it was in time of peace,

though not of very settled peace, when he left the hospital wards behind him.

Naturally he was a good deal admired and looked up to at home. The commonness of heroism does not make it the less heroic, and his courage and patriotism were just as much prized by his family as if he were the only wounded soldier living, instead of one of thousands scattered throughout the land. So they petted him and pitied him, until, in self-defence, he was forced into laughing protests that had a good deal of earnestness under their light tone.

"It went in a good cause, Jenny," he said, one day, when his sister was bemoaning the lost arm. "There! it's no use to cry for spilt milk, or spilt blood. If I don't miss it, who need? I thought you were more patriotic."

"O, of course I am proud of it, and all that," rather indefinitely answered Miss Jenny; "only if it could have been in your shoulder, or somewhere where it didn't show, you know."

"O, you are afraid of its spoiling my beauty? What is it the old proverb says about something that never is in danger? Just to oblige you, though, I would have chosen some wound out of sight, if I could; but I suppose the ball that hit me was marked *arm*, and obeyed orders."

"I had a letter from Annie Fairlie this morning," resumed Jenny, after a somewhat dissatisfied pause. "She says they are all coming here for the summer; and what do you think? they have taken the Miles's cottage, close by us, you know. Isn't it nice?"

"Very nice—for you."

"And not for you?" queried Jenny, suspiciously observant of an almost imperceptible cadence in her brother's voice.

"I? O, I am supposed to have no particular concern in the matter; especially if Miss Annie takes your view of the arm question."

"She doesn't, indeed!" eagerly protested Jenny, forgetful of self-defence in justifying her friend. "She pities you so much!"

Here her brother's eyebrows went up rather ominously, seeing which she hastened to emphasize her speech, by continuing:

"A whole page of her letter is about you, and it is so nice! She admires you just as much as ever."

"How considerate!" said the captain, laughing; "as of course I should break my heart if it had happened otherwise."

"Now, Charley," dolefully pleaded his sister, "how can you speak in that unkind, sarcastic way, when you must know it makes me feel so?"

"Why should it make you feel 'so,' however that may be?" asked he, wheeling his chair around so as to face her the more directly.

"Because—now, Charley, you know how I have always wanted Annie for a sister," pleaded Jenny, lifting appealing eyes to his.

"Please yourself, dear. I haven't the slightest wish to interfere with any of your arrangements."

"O, that sounds very nice; but in order to be my sister, she must be your wife."

"I don't know. Your object would be equally accomplished if you were to form a matrimonial alliance with Harry Fairlie."

"Five years old!" exploded Jenny, indignantly. "I think, Charley, you ought to be ashamed to quiz me when I'm every bit in earnest!"

"So am I, when I say, that, although I haven't the least objection to your taking a sister, my taking a wife is quite another thing. Now pray don't make me appear so conceited, with this talk of wives whom I could not get for the asking, no doubt—a one-armed fellow like me."

"O, as for that, I'm perfectly sure that Annie—"

"Not another word, Jenny!" interrupted the captain, quickly, a dark flush perceptibly staining his cheek. "In your anxiety to be generous to me, don't be unjust to Miss Fairlie. Besides," he added, more playfully, "I am a hopeless subject for your match-making, being already wedded to glory—and a package of old letters."

"What's that, Charley?" asked his sister, not catching the last part of his sentence, that was spoken rather to himself than to her.

"Only some of my nonsense," he answered, evasively. And she questioned no further.

In due time arrived the Fairlee family and all its appendages, consisting of mamma, Miss Annie, a little brother and sister, governess, nurse and servants generally.

Jenny's delight in the presence of her friend knew no bounds, and her brother could not cloud her pleasure by refusing his companionship. So he made a third in the party, much to Miss Fairlie's gratification, and perhaps somewhat to his own; for where is the young man who can remain wholly indifferent to the pleasure of pleasing a pretty girl? And very pretty Miss Annie Fairlie was, and very attractive, too, as a rule; but Captain Everard, at a loss, perhaps, for any other flaw to find, told himself that had she been more finely sympathetic, she would not have lavished her pity on him quite so freely.

"I don't consider myself on the list of ineligible yet, by any means," he said, one day, laughingly. "I can fish and drive as well with my left hand as I ever could with my right; I am learning to write and play billiards, and I even hope, with a little pains, to master your new mania of croquet."

"O Captain Everard," sighed Miss Annie, sweetly, "how brave of you to take such a loss so calmly!"

"It isn't calmness," protested the captain; "that is, if you mean calmness gained by suffering and trial. It is simply that I really do not regret what I cannot regard as a loss."

"O, I am sure I admire your courage as much as I pity your sacrifice!" cried Miss Annie, warmly.

The captain, seeing the uselessness of further argument, was silent, but his brows involuntarily arched themselves after a fashion common with him. Just then his glance met two large, dark-gray eyes, in which lay an expression exactly corresponding with his own unspoken thought. The next moment, however, the lashes fell, concealing from longer observation of his the secrets of the owner's mind.

Presently Captain Charley developed a sudden interest in Master Harry Fairlie, and loitered around to where the children were playing, at a little distance, under the charge of their governess.

"Miss Walden," the young man began, abruptly, "*you* do not feel an overwhelming pity for me, do you?"

"Not at all," she answered, quietly, without any attempt to appear ignorant of what he referred to.

"Indeed!" he continued, looking fixedly at her. "And why not, if I may ask? I thought that women's tender hearts were always supposed to be overflowing with pity."

Without answering, she looked up at him and smiled; a smile in which he was forced to join.

"I see that you understand me," he said. "You do not think a maimed soldier an object of pity?"

"Not in a case like yours, certainly."

"And why not? I am quite in earnest now."

She looked up at him again, but this time with serious eyes.

"Should I pity myself for gaining the desire of my whole heart and soul?" she said. "Should I regard as a sacrifice any loss that proved it to me?"

Captain Everard's whole face kindled with interest.

"How you read my feelings!" he exclaimed. And with the words involuntarily his fingers pressed hers. But with that touch her whole bearing changed; the light died out from her eyes, the warmth from her manner. She made no attempt to withdraw her hand from his clasp, but it lay there cold and passive as a lifeless thing. Releasing it, he began to

talk of something else, but the old interest was not to be revived. He walked away, thinking what a creature of contraries she seemed; as frank as reserved, as indifferent as enthusiastic.

Nor was this the last time that such a reflection was forced on him. She appeared to attract only to repel, and he never could feel certain of interesting her, let his subject and manner be ever so carefully chosen. With all this, she was scrupulously polite, and the only fault that could be found by the severest critic was a listless indifference which made her seem sometimes to speak and listen mechanically. But reserve is a stronger bar than caprice to progress towards intimacy, and Captain Everard often felt himself put back to a greater distance than on their first meeting.

One afternoon he sat by his window, pretending to read, but really watching a little group in the garden just without. Harry and Nettie Fairlie were nestled close to Miss Walden, who, sitting on one of the rustic benches, was writing very busily. The young man could not hear the conversation, but something very interesting he judged it to be, from the children's absorbed faces, the frequent bursts of merriment, and Miss Walden's smile as she paused occasionally to look up as if for instructions how to proceed. The unsuspected witness of this little scene, as he furtively watched it, thought he had never seen so sweet a face as the one on which he was gazing. Then, as he noted its soft and gentle expression, its arch gayety and unreserve, he sighed, remembering the contrast of distance, pride and indifference, which his presence usually caused. Still, this reflection, though far from agreeable, could not suffice to prevent him from joining Miss Walden as soon as the children had run away to the croquet ground.

"You seemed to be enjoying yourselves so much here," he said, "that I have ventured to intrude."

"It is all over now," she answered, not lifting her eyes as he sat down beside her.

"What! am I too late for the fun? But I may stay, now that I am here, I suppose?"

"As you are monarch of all you survey," she retorted, laughing, "I presume that was meant as a hint to me to ask permission to remain as a favor?"

"I wish you would ask a favor of me," he said, quickly. "Anything that it is in my power to grant."

"Thank you. It is not so much the will as the ability that you lack, no doubt."

"That means that you care for nothing which I could give you?"

"I must make my own happiness, I suppose," she replied, in the same low, even tones. "That is the truest philosophy, isn't it?"

"And your philosophy renders you perfectly happy? You are more fortunate than I," he said, rather bitterly.

"I did not say that. But have you no curiosity as to the cause of our good time just now?" she continued, turning the conversation.

"I have a curiosity about many things into which I have no right to inquire."

"Well, this is no secret, at all events," she said, quite unmoved by his manner. "I was busy writing Harry's love-letter."

"Harry's love-letter?" repeated the captain, laughing in spite of himself. "Has he fallen a victim to the master-passion so early in life?"

"O yes; Harry has a heart beyond his years. Every week since he came, I have written him a letter—most appallingly sentimental!—to his little wife."

"Ah!" said Captain Everard, with a hardly-suppressed sigh, "I wish you would write a letter—no matter how sentimental—to my little wife."

"Certainly," she answered, coolly, taking out her pencil and tablets. "What is her name?"

"O, if you don't know her name, I certainly do not," he replied, an unmistakable significance in voice and eyes. "I hoped that you might find her for me."

"O, I see yours is a parallel case to Mrs. Glasse and her hare," she answered, with a quick little laugh, which he very naturally found somewhat mortifying to listen to.

"Do you believe one can judge of character by the handwriting?" he asked, presently.

"Sometimes—yes, usually, I think," she answered, after a moment's consideration.

"What should you say of this?" he asked, taking a folded paper from his note-book and giving it to her. "I am curious to see if your impressions agree with mine."

It was a copy of a little song which Annie Fairlie had given to Jenny Everard, and which the captain, from some whim, had coveted and teased away. Miss Walden glanced at it, a quick smile coming and going on her lips.

"I am hardly a fair judge," she said, "as I know the writer."

"There is just where the mystery lies," said the captain, reflectively studying the paper. "Of course I know the writer, too, and it is because she is so utterly unlike what her writing indicates that I wished to know your opinion. Now, if I knew nothing of the writer, judging simply from this hand, I should say that she was—"

"Captain Everard," interrupted Miss Walden, with visible effort checking him, "before you say any more, I ought to tell you that that writing is—is mine."

"Miss Walden—yours!" exclaimed the young man, in a tone wherein surprise mingled with some stronger emotion.

"Miss Fairlie was busy, and, at her request, I copied the song which she wished to give Miss Everard," continued Miss Walden, in her usual soft, slow tones, only the too careful modulation of which could betray how much the confession cost her.

"Miss Walden," said the young man, leaning over her and speaking very earnestly, "may I say, without seeming intrusive or presumptuous, what inexpressible happiness this discovery has given me?"

"You may say what you like, of course," she answered, attempting to laugh away any serious aspect which the affair might be taking. "I should hardly dare dictate to the master of the domain."

"I will not forget your permission," he said, with quiet significance. "I am glad that the instincts of my heart could not so deceive me—that, after all, there is no conflict between the old love and the new. Miss Walden, you understand me?"

"I am afraid I do," she answered, rising and looking steadily at him. "I wish I did not. Captain Everard, pray let me go while I can at least respect you."

"No, Miss Walden," said the young man, rising also, but detaining her less by his gesture of delay than by the gravity of his tone. "Respect alone is a very cold word, but if you have ever had any regard for me, you will not refuse to tell me how I have been in danger of forfeiting it?"

"Can you really be in any doubt?" she asked, looking at him with hesitating surprise.

"I am forced to conclude that you were referring to what I said just now," he returned. "But although such an avowal might annoy you, I hardly see how it could lessen your respect for the speaker."

"Not if he were bound in honor to another?" said Miss Walden, in a low voice, her eyes on the ground. "O Captain Everard, be as you were before, and let us forget this mistake—"

"Rather let us understand it," interrupted the young man; "for some explanation it certainly needs. If you meant just now that I was bound to another, you were utterly wrong. I have never even cared for any other woman, and at this moment I am as absolutely unfettered as—as it seems likely I always shall remain," he finished, with a melancholy smile.

Miss Walden came forward a step, and then checked herself.

"But Miss Fairlie?" she said, in a low voice.

"Miss Fairlie?" repeated the captain. "Did you fancy me bound to her, then? I thought you knew me better—" At which point he abruptly left his reproach unfinished.

Without further question, Miss Walden came to his side and held out her hand.

"Forgive me, Captain Everard," said she. "I must have seemed very unkind and uncivil, but, indeed, report had so thoroughly convinced me of your engagement, that I should almost as soon have thought of doubting my own existence."

He took her hand and held it, looking down at her.

"Miss Walden," he said, "I told you just now that I had never cared for any one else; but once, not so very long ago, my heart was stirred with a feeling towards which the love I could not resist for you seemed like a sort of treachery. Now I know that it only proved its truth.

"I used to read your letters over and over again," he continued, after he had resumed his old position at her side, "and speculate as to the character of the writer. It was not so difficult, for they unconsciously revealed a great deal, in the very handwriting even. I have never seen another similar."

He paused and looked at her, as if expecting some reply.

"I have often been told that I write a peculiar hand," she said. "I know that, attempt as I may to disguise it, I can never succeed in getting anything more than a copy more or less rough. My friends usually think they could recognize my writing among a thousand," she added, smiling.

"Exactly," said the captain, quickly. "I thought so, too, and that very belief led me

into error. I remembered so well every curve and turn of your handwriting, which meant so much to me, and was so convinced that there could not be another like it, that, when I saw it apparently belonging to Miss Fairlie, I could only shut my eyes and try to reconcile impossibilities. Then the initial, which was all I ever had of the name, answered to hers. May I know now for what it really did stand?"

"Agnes," she answered.

"Agnes," he repeated. "It suits your letters and yourself. But, if you will pardon another question, why did you suddenly break off a correspondence which had become my greatest interest and delight?"

"Let me first explain why I began it," answered Miss Walden, reddening a little. "I never had a brother, but my cousin, Alfred Warner, was almost the same to me—"

"Alfred Warner?" exclaimed her listener, leaning forward with renewed interest, "who was killed in a guerilla skirmish?"

"Yes. You remember that at one time his regiment was stationed near yours, and I remember," she continued, with a momentary smile, "all the kindness which you were constantly showing to a boy whose youth and inexperience needed some such kind adviser. All of the officers were not so considerate, and when some of them took advantage of poor Alfred's thoughtlessness to lead him into a serious difficulty, it was your generous help that took him out unharmed. His gratitude—and consequently mine, for he told me everything—knew no bounds. I felt as if I must somehow thank you, but I could think of no other way than to write to you. I was only an impulsive girl then—for two years of trial will sometimes do the work of five in maturing the nature—and I saw no impropriety in addressing, on such a subject, one whom I could not think of as a stranger. Of course I would not give my name, only some address, so that I might know if my letter ever reached you. Then you answered, and I wrote again, and—well, I don't think I need tell you any more about it," she concluded, with a smile.

"But you have not yet told me why you ceased to write," persisted the captain, breaking the silence which followed her explanation.

"Because I was too proud, I suppose," she answered, frankly. "When my father died, I passed suddenly and unexpectedly from wealth to destitution. Poor Alfred, too, was gone, so I had no one in the whole world to

look to. I was thrown completely on my own resources, and forced to take the first situation I could get—that of nursery-governess. That did not lower me in my own eyes, but I knew how people are accustomed to look at such things, and fancied that Captain Everard might not care to continue a correspondence begun under very different auspices.”

“In which you wronged Captain Everard cruelly,” responded he. “If you could have known how I wondered and fretted over the abrupt cessation of those letters for which I had grown to care more than for anything else in the world, I think you could not have been so unkind. I believe I must hold you responsible in a degree for this,” he added, laughingly, touching his empty sleeve; “for I worked myself into such a fever of anxiety, that there was no doing anything with me.”

As he spoke she looked up at him pityingly, but did not speak.

“And to think that you have known me all the while that you were treating me like an intrusive stranger! But one thing you did not know,” he continued, his voice sinking to a murmur as he bent closer, “that I have loved your image ever since I first began to fancy it from your letters; that I never knew one shadow of wavering until I saw you, which most of all proves me faithful. And now, Agnes, in return, can you not learn to love me a little?”

“No,” she answered, unhesitatingly, looking straight in his face, with what seemed almost a gleam of mirth in her dark eyes.

The captain’s face blanched.

“I cannot learn now,” she went on, quickly, “because—because I learned long ago.”

When the children presently came running up from their game, they found no lack of color in the cheeks of either.

A PAIR OF NOBODIES.

BY LOTTIE BROWN.

WAINWRIGHT HALL and its surroundings, when viewed in the dim twilight of a rainy autumnal day, was by no means suggestive of social comfort, and one would hardly dream of a union between them; and Doctor Wainwright, standing at one of the long windows of the library, gave a grunt of satisfaction as he gazed out upon the west lawn, and in among the trees from whose leaves the rain had been dropping steadily ever since his arrival, and, judging from the appearance of the dull-hued clouds that were slowly settling down, was likely to do so for hours to come; and tapping the glass whistled in a sort of triumphal manner as if all this was working something greatly to his advantage.

This handsome young doctor was by no means of a misanthropical turn of mind, but when he bought this old tumble-down mansion it was with a sort of exultation in the thought that in so doing he had purchased the right to enjoy at certain periods his bachelorhood as he pleased. Even after a score or more of masons, carpenters, etc., had spent weeks in altering the house, and making it habitable, he had not the most indistinct idea that his privacy would ever be intruded upon, and therefore when Mrs. Dornton, his young and fashionable sister, declared her intention of accompanying him with a few of her dear friends, and opening his den, and trying to make it homelike for a few weeks, the reader may rest assured that it was received with consternation; and there-

fore, when on their departure for Norton a dull drizzling rain set in, and continued during the long day, it was no wonder that he anxiously looked forward to their arrival as a termination of his sufferings, and an end to the gayety in which the whole party had indulged during the long, comfortless journey.

Standing out boldly against the dull sky, the rain washing away every trace of beauty and bringing out into bold relief every harsh, ugly feature, the old house looked more like some gloomy old castle than the hospitable home of a quiet American gentleman; and the effect was by no means lessened by the tall, dark trees which surrounded it, amidst whose branches the wind swept with a low, mournful sound, driving the rain against the windows in fitful gusts.

Doctor Wainwright thrust his head out of the carriage window, as they drove up the long, dark avenue, and, satisfied with the gloomy aspect, informed the company that they were already within his ground, and then anxiously awaited the effect.

"How grandly beautiful!" exclaimed Mrs. Dornton.

"Perfect!" chimed Miss LeFarge, her friend and companion.

Doctor Wainwright groaned.

"Pshaw!" screamed Miss Grey, "it's a perfect old barn!"

"God bless you!" inwardly ejaculated the tormented; and thus they reached the door

of Wainwright Hall, and in the quiet of the library, under the influence of Miss Grey's exclamation, and the gloomy appearance in general, the owner felt that his hour of triumph had indeed come, and that one week would clear his house, and leave him alone in his glory; and not even the sudden opening of the library door, letting a flood of warm light into the cold, dark room, and revealing a well-laden table, sparkling with silver and glass, for a moment convinced him to the contrary.

"You are not disposed to play the host to-night, so I have taken the liberty, you see, of providing your guests with necessary comforts," said Mrs. Dornton, laughing as she dragged him out into the warm sitting-room.

"Ladies, I told you that here in his den, you would see him in his natural state, a perfect bear. You perceive already he had forgotten that we live."

"Not so, ladies, upon my honor. I only retired for the moment to allow you a few minutes to yourselves, and, would you believe it, I was thinking of you the moment Mary entered. I was wondering what effect this gloomy old house, and disagreeable surroundings, would have upon your gay spirits."

"Not a pleasant one, I frankly confess, Doctor Wainwright," said Miss Grey, "that is, so far as I am concerned. I don't speak for Mrs. Dornton or Miss LeFarge."

"I'll speak for both! I like it very well. It is grand, picturesque; but I promise you that in one week from to-day you shall be alone to your own gloomy thoughts, and your old house. It will never do to remain here longer at this season of the year;" and Mrs. Dornton took her seat at the head of the table, with the air of one that had relieved herself of a great burden, and her brother, truly relieved of the same, handed the other ladies to their places, and then seated himself, in a happier state of mind than he had dared to dream of indulging on this particular evening.

And this was the way that Wainwright Hall came to be the bachelor den of Doctor Edward Wainwright, for, true to her word, Mrs. Dornton took her departure at an early day, and left him alone as he desired.

He was by no means a woman hater, but one of those unfortunate beings who loved peace and quiet, but whose path had unfortunately been laid through that portion of the world frequented only by fashion, and its

heartless train; by women, whose ideas of home and happiness were exactly opposite to his own; and he hoped that his house and surroundings had produced an effect upon Mrs. Dornton that would prove lasting, and, in that way, keep this, his only place of rest and quiet, free from herself and followers.

"There! I like this;" said he to himself, as he sat by the window a day or two after their departure. "There is a sort of freedom here that I never before realized. Now, here I am, monarch of all I survey, and afraid of nothing in the shape of an interruption. There are no inquisitive females bursting in upon me, and prying into my affairs with a curiosity that is unbearable. Here, at least, I am free from that. After all, this is not such a gloomy old place as Mary thought it. Now I consider myself happy for once in my life. Ah! what is that?" And he stepped quietly into the shadow of the curtain.

"No, my dear, there is not the slightest danger of Doctor Wainwright ever troubling you; he has enough to do with his books, his gun, his horses, and his own gloomy thoughts;" said the voice of the housekeeper, as she ushered some person into the little room.

"I would not like to play the part of an intruder here."

"A remarkably sweet voice," said Doctor Wainwright.

"But I do not like the idea of giving up this fine piano—although I dare say he would think me taking a great liberty."

"Not at all! If I had thought so, I certainly would never have invited you to come here to play. But there! I must run, for there is a world of work to do since these city ladies turned the house completely upside down. Enjoy yourself as long as you choose. I'll warrant you there is no danger of being interrupted."

With this the housekeeper left the room.

Doctor Wainwright peeped out. She was at the piano, so he could not see her face—only a small, neat figure, and a mass of dark brown curls, and a pair of white, well-shaped hands, flitting in and out, among the sheets of music. Presently she pushed them all away and began to play.

It was some grand old piece, and the white hands flew over the keys throwing out music that thrilled the ear of the listener, as he leaned against the window, watching her with breathless interest.

Then she sung, song after song, until, evidently weary of it, she turned half way around

on the stool and looked at some music that lay on a stand near her. Then he saw her face. It was just the face to belong to a form and hand like hers—a pretty one, with soft brown eyes and womanly mouth.

Had she been plain he would have kept perfectly quiet, or at his first opportunity slipped out, and the matter would have ended there; but as she happened to be nothing of the sort, he stepped out from his place of concealment, and stood before her with a hasty—

“Do not be alarmed. I must beg pardon for my abrupt entrance.”

She dropped the music, and rising, said:

“O no! It is I who should beg your pardon for thus intruding on your privacy.”

“Be seated, please, and do not speak of intrusion. May I ask whom I have the pleasure of addressing?”

“I? O, I am—I am—nobody at all, sir.”

“Nobody? That is strange. I did not know that there existed another nobody in this world. I thought I alone had right to that title.”

“You are Doctor Wainwright?”

“Yes, but nobody for all that.”

“Who says so?”

“Everybody.”

“Then it must be so.”

“Are you fond of music?”

“Very.”

“Will you do me a favor?”

“Certainly.”

“Come here as often in the future as has been your wont in the past, and use the piano, and also the library, which is close at hand.”

“O, thank you. You are very kind.”

“I will not interrupt you again.”

“You have not interrupted me, sir.”

“Yes I have. I know when I interrupt as well as when I am interrupted.”

“You are very strange.”

“Nobodies always are.”

“Then of course I am strange.”

“Well, rather!”

“It is late. I have duties to attend.”

“Late? No, it is not nine yet.”

“My day's work begins at nine o'clock.”

“Shall I attend you?”

“No! Thank you.” And the brown curls vanished through the open door.

Doctor Wainwright laughed.

“This is odd, and no mistake. I wonder who she is?”

There was the housekeeper, and he sought her and ignored.

“O, she's nobody, sir.”

“Nonsense! That is just what she told me herself. She must have a name and habitation.”

“Her name, sir, is Amy Lindsay. She is the schoolteacher in the village, and an odd little body. No one knows where she came from, or anything more about her, any more than that she is a perfect lady, and so no one troubles her with questions. I heard her play at Mrs. Neal's, and thinking that you would not object, I told her to come up to the Hall and use the piano once in awhile, and she has done so every now and then when you were away. She does not like strangers.”

“Humph! I thought so!”

Thus the owner of Wainwright Hall found his privacy broken in upon, pleasantly to be sure, still without a murmur. Often returning from his lonely excursions, he heard her voice ringing through the parlor, or found a neat little figure hidden away in the big armchair in the library, busily reading some work that seemed a treat to her, and often he drew her into conversation, or read to her from some of his favorites, keeping her there as long as propriety would permit. Once he engaged her until dark, and then begged her company to tea, and afterwards saw her safely home to her boarding-place.

In his walks, he ventured, one afternoon, to pass the schoolhouse as she came forth with her troop of scholars, and he walked beside her to her door, wishing at the same time that he was a schoolboy, if for no other reason, than for the privilege of holding her hand as the bold urchin who walked with them.

“Rather strange,” he thought, as he walked towards home. “I used to have a strong aversion to schoolmarm's. It is wonderful how time changes a person. Wonder what Mary would say?”

Wainwright Hall looked quite bright and cheerful in the radiance of the setting sun, even although the snow lay on every hand, and the trees, bereft of their green mantle, seemed rugged and old. As he walked up the broad avenue, he thought:

“Not a bad place this, to live a married life in. I wonder if Amy would dislike it? She might object to the master, if not to the house! I've half a mind to ask her.”

There was a little start at the idea of this, for never before in his life had he harbored such a thought, and its abruptness startled him.

That night, sitting in his library, he looked about him with a feeling of dissatisfaction. A bright fire, a softly-carpeted floor, rows of handsomely-bound books staring him in the face, a few choice pictures upon the walls, a small table with a repast rich and ample, and his worthy self half-buried in the depths of his cushioned chair! Could one fancy that this was not a most enviable position? Surely there was no lack of wealth and ease, and what more can any one wish?

With half-closed eyes, Wainwright's fancy fitted out the picture.

A sweet-faced woman, with Amy Lindsay's brown hair and eyes, sitting opposite him with her bright, happy face and ringing laugh, her white hand flitting in and out among the cups, and ever and anon lifting her brown eyes to his, full of confidence and love!

"Pshaw!"

He gave a sort of impatient kick that made the dishes rattle. No wonder the world called him selfish, when he lived in this sort of a way, year after year, in a world full of good women.

But as he could not be married just at that moment, he ate his supper, and then, taking down a book, tried to become interested in its contents.

Perhaps in his manner he had unconsciously betrayed to her something that told her what was in his heart, for she, woman-like, had a desire to tease him, or rather to appear indifferent, for she did not show herself at the Hall for five long weeks; and perhaps it might have been longer had not the impatient owner gone out one Saturday afternoon, and, begging her company for a sleigh-ride, carried her around to his own door, inside of which Mrs. Merton kept her captive all the long afternoon and evening.

"Doctor Wainwright, I am going away to-morrow. So, I suppose, I must say good-by! I do not like it. It is a sad word."

"Going away, Amy? Wainwright Hall will be dull indeed. I shall miss you very much. It is dull at best, and without an occasional visit from you it will be perfectly unbearable. It has afforded me for the past few months the happiest hours I have known. I could live here all my life. Will you, Amy?"

Amy looked up quickly, her face crimsoning, and read in his eyes more than his words expressed, and her own drooped beneath his searching gaze.

"I am waiting for my answer, Amy."

"You surprise me."

"No, I do not. Your woman's head has discovered it ere this, if your heart has not."

Amy laughed.

"Will you wait for my answer?"

"How long?"

"Until we meet again."

"And that will be—?"

"Soon."

"May I write?"

"No. I want a good opportunity to think. But good-by until we meet!" And Amy gave him her hand.

"Good-by, child! I believe that we shall meet soon. Amy, good-by."

Had Mrs. Dorn-ton been present, she would have had plenty of company in her growling complaints at the dullness of his house, for, after the departure of Miss Lindsay, the sunshine seemed to have gone out completely. The winter had nearly passed, and everything, outside as well as in, wore a more sombre attire. The dull, gray sky, the frequent rains and winds, the gloomy appearance in general, by no means lessened the gloom that seemed to have settled upon him, and, for the first time during his residence at the Hall, he felt the want of society, and began to devise means by which he might pass away the balance of the dull winter.

Suddenly there came a letter from Mrs. Dorn-ton, and he as suddenly was made aware of the fact that he had a sister in existence; and a few evenings later he found himself not uncomfortably situated in her hospitable home in the city.

"I really believe, Edward, that you found some attraction at Norton beside that old haunted house of yours, or you never would have remained there all this fall and winter. Say, is there not some fair rustic pining away on account of your absence?" said Mrs. Dorn-ton, as her husband and brother sat one evening over the chess-board.

"Stuff, Mary!"

"O, I believe it. Come, tell us about it? It will be the best joke of the season."

"I dare say! For that very reason I will not satisfy your curiosity."

"Curiosity! I must positively beg your pardon, but I am not afflicted with that malady."

"You will find out in time."

Like the good-natured fellow he was, he became a martyr to the whims of his pretty sister, and for the next few weeks accompanied her upon shopping expeditions, to the opera, drove her about town, and in many other

ways wasted his time, and so, as a matter of course, escorted her one evening to Mrs. Hanson's party, at the same time wishing himself back to Wainwright Hall, rather than to be subjected to three or four hours of such mental torture as he felt it was to be his lot to undergo. But knowing his sister's disposition, he preferred even this to the storm which he would bring down upon himself by hesitating for a moment to comply with her wishes; and so he pocketed his dislike, and found himself in the brilliantly-lighted room at a seasonable hour, doing, to the best of his ability, the agreeable to several old maids and manoeuvring mothers, or, now and then chatting with some old friend, dragging himself through in the best possible manner.

Late in the evening, standing beside Miss Grey, a light form in a cloud of snowy lace floated past him, and, by a slight turn of the head, the sweet face of Amy Lindsay flashed upon his astonished sight.

"Who was that, Miss Grey?"

"O! Nobody at all."

"Indeed! She has the air of a somebody."

"Well, she is, I suppose. It is Miss Lindsay, and that old gentleman is her father. A year or two ago he failed in business, and the family was reduced to poverty. Instead of holding up her head, as a sensible woman would have done, this Amy conceived a romantic idea of keeping them with her own hands, and—would you believe it? she actually retired from society, and went away to some country place as a schoolteacher—or something of the kind. Wasn't it an absurd idea?"

"Perfectly ridiculous!"

"Some strange freak of fortune has restored them to their position, and now this ex-schoolmarm ventures to put on an appearance. They are highly respected, I believe."

Doctor Wainwright was on nettles for the next ten minutes, until he was relieved from the troublesome task of entertaining Miss Grey, and then he made his way through the crowd in search of Amy. He found her engaged with a friend for the moment, and he quietly waited until he could approach and speak to her alone.

In a few moments he saw an opportunity, and stepping forward greeted her.

"Doctor Wainwright?"

"Amy!"

"I am surprised to meet you."

"And I much more so. How does this all happen?"

"It's a long story, and I'll tell you some day."

"When you are at the Hall?"

"Yes."

"Is that your answer?"

"Yes."

"And you will return with me?"

"Yes."

"I told you so!" triumphantly exclaimed Mrs. Dornton, as her brother and his lovely betrothed stood near her; "and it all came of buying Wainwright Hall."

"Of course I had nothing to do with it."

"No! You're a nobody."

"I told you so, Amy."

"So we are a pair of nobodies."

A ROUGH TIME.

BY EMMA MORTIMER BABSON.

It is two years since an episode commenced that has closed with the present winter. An attempt was made to engulf my life in one that was not even sufficient for itself. But the wheel would not work within the wheel; it preferred its own independent rotation. The result was, that my little bark went adrift on the surf wave of civilization, and tossed, frail and free, on the verge of dangers it knew not.

That first Western summer! A horrible incubus stole out from the rank woods and up from the edges of the swampy Missouri River, and grasped me. It was like a deadly drug. "Nature's sweet restorer" became a cruel tyrant. It grasped me ere I had hardly risen from my bed in the morning; it bore me down in the sultry noons, it goaded me to insensibility in the great glowing twilight when the sun set, not only in the west, but flooded the eastern woods until they were all rose-red, set the river on fire, poured over such leagues of arching sky that one might have thought the terrible judgment day had come and found all men the children of God. And perhaps it will come so. One can hardly stand under those skies, and believe the Giver of that affluent beauty the Being who will torture weak mortals forever and ever because their little lamps burned dimly, or, perhaps, not at all.

I was the weakest of mortals, and I dragged a chain. Circumstances pressed me, but I could forget duty in sleep, had not death and starvation allied and besieged me in my inertia. I broke away from the conflict one morning, and fled out of the long window of my room—where the white morning-glory vines were going heavenward and vaunting how high they could swing their silken cups and not spill the sunshine—fled down the burning green banks, past the prize straw-

berry-bed put down in sawdust, to the stable.

"What yer after, missie?"

"I want a halter, Gus."

"What fer?"

"I'm going for Mouse."

"Now you just wait till I gets dis yer hoss rubbed down, and I'll get yer pounny fer yer. Don't yer think of goin' into that c'ral, missie; Massa Otis's mustang's there; like as not he'd go fer yer. He's a terrible vicious brute, and knows as much as a man."

"How long will it take you to finish Prince?"

"Well, maybe half an hour. I'se bound to make him shine *dis* mornin'."

"But I want Mouse *now*, Gus."

"Just wait half an hour, Missie. I'll saddle him fer yer. Don't yer go into that c'ral!"

I took down the pony bridle, waited a few moments for Gus, and then went down to the corral. It was at the foot of one of the green slopes; not a very large enclosure, holding only three horses—the unbroken little mustang, Lady Bess, Annie Howard's beautiful bay filly, and my little gray pony, Mouse. Mouse was very little smaller than Lady, but he *loved* her. He stood kissing her glossy neck when I reached the fence. All the horses looked up at me as I opened the gate. I had a cracker in my apron pocket. I held it up to view. Mouse remembered the flavor and came up instantly. I slipped the bridle over his ears, led him through the gate and saddled him. I left him to nicker to Lady from the hitching-post while I went in for my habit.

I dressed hurriedly, conscious that the window vine was kindly drinking my health in two pink cups which it touched with the most debonair grace and highness. I was just as much obliged to it as if it did me any good.

I went out, flipped Mouse's nose, made him

turn around to the block, and got into the saddle.

"Where are you going, Mortimer?" and two blue eyes and a dusting-brush appeared in the door.

"Over the river."

"What for?"

"Pawpaws."

"Bring me some."

"Yes."

Mouse went jerking down the drive, resentful of martingale, as usual. I pulled the gate to after us, and nearly shut it on his tail by way of punishment. In return he kicked it so that twenty feet of fence shivered.

"O you little villain!" said I, between my teeth. "But you'll get the kinks taken out of you before you find any more gates to kick."

It was a clear September morning. As much cool air in New England would have braced me firm and light as a Cremona-string, but Western winds blow to no such good purpose. I would not have gone through the town, only I wanted my mail. For this purpose I stopped at the post-office. The boy brought me out a noble package. I tossed it into the twine satchel at my saddle-bow, and went on my way rejoicing.

There was a boat in. I went aboard with a couple of teams, a Missourian in blue jean on a mule, a couple of women with baby budgets, and a stray man or two. I watched them push us off with poles, then, while we crossed in the turgid, surging water, I tried to read a letter. I read a page, enough to make my heart swell, my eyes dim, and my soul to rise up with a cry of terrible desolation, as I took in the rude scene before me with new eyes as it were; then there was a puny shout, a slight shock, and the rope was thrown ashore by which we were veered to the landing. The rustle of disembarkation began, and I was aroused to the business in hand of getting safe ashore and up the slippery bank. Thence the road wound away, free and lovely.

The pony was free enough now. I knew what the shapely, gray thing could do in the way of carrying a rider, and that jerking gait of his, being the expressed essence of obstinacy, always bore very hard on my forbearance. He always began with it on a very hot day, tiring me out so that I was forced to let him walk in the laziest and most listless manner all the way to town and back. Mouse and I had our private difficulties, but let any one step between us in our conflicts, and we

turned our dissatisfaction into common stock, and routed him.

Mouse liked the smooth winding road as well as I did. It was new to both of us. And he saw as well as I, that the sparse, high timber, laced together with vines, in groups, rising among the pawpaw thickets, was a fresh sight. There are no pawpaws on the other side of the river in Kansas; the low brush consists mostly of hazel bushes; and the fruit is utterly unknown to New England lands.

Soon the free gallop settled into the thorough-bred pace. I always pronounced Mouse "a darling" when he paced. So we went on happily under the *lapis-lazuli* sky, while the wild doves cooed, the redstarts twittered, and—

"Blue and green were glad together."

At last I rode into the thicket.

At first the bushes, with their broad, flimsy leaves, looked lank and empty, and I pushed on for a considerable distance before I noticed the dead ripe fruit falling around me. I looked down then, and saw pawpaws lying in profusion everywhere.

I suppose they are American bananas. The pods of creamy pith are delicious if one likes the somewhat insipid flavor. They look like bananas, but they taste like nothing but pawpaws, unless it is cup-custard with the extract left out.

I slipped down among them. Mouse saw them, but seemed to regard them with supreme indifference. I was enthusiastic, and resented this.

"Mouse," said I, "that disposition is very unbecoming in you. Pride always has a fall. You'll very likely see the time when you'll be glad to get pawpaws to eat. There was the son of a rich man, once, who was an epicure, and he saw the time when he was glad to eat husks. You are only the pony of a poor girl; what, then, may you not come to? Be warned, Mouse; remember how small you are, compared to other horses, and subdue that prideful air of yours."

Then I ate a pawpaw, by way of example; he looked interested, but still declined to partake.

"Very well," said I, "I wash my hands of you; and you need not expect any more butter crackers."

I sat down against a tree with my lap full, and began to read my letters. One from my dear Fannie, one from good old Mrs. Cushing, one from my old publisher, Mr. Elliott, and two—

I don't know how long I sat there. I was quite unconscious of where I was, only the green rustling over my head, and the fruit scenting the warm low sky, helped on my pleasant thoughts. Suddenly I heard the low voice of a man, and cautious steps near me. My God! how almost noiseless they were! but I had heard them. There was a faint crackle not four feet away, and I felt that eyes were on me. I was prisoned in by those dense bushes, swathed in the long, close skirt of my habit, and my horse, low as he was, was too high for me to mount quickly from the level ground on which he stood. For a moment I thought I was lost; what had I not to fear in that place of ill-repute—Missouri? All the horrors I had ever heard rushed upon me.

I had one conviction; that I must not appear frightened. I began to collect my papers as naturally as possible, and rose to my feet. That miserable fruit—it fell in the folds of my skirt and weighed me down. But I cleared my feet. I tore away that clinging drapery as I reached the side of my pony, not sparing time to look behind me, put my foot in the stirrup, and sprang upon his back. I heard bushes breaking—I struck him—some one started up and grasped at the bridle, but he avoided the clutch, and bounded away. Off he tore into the very depths of the woods.

There had been two men to fear, and I still feared them, the more because I did not know where I was going; I had seen a vicious, clouded, bloated face under my horse's tossing head; so I gave him rein, and we went on, on! It was dangerous riding. I was kept alert, watching his ears as he wound swiftly among the trees, that I might not be swayed from my seat in a miscalculation of which side of a trunk he was going, and bending and warding a passage past and through the low boughs overhead. He leaped a creek, at last, and stood still, looking about wistfully, and I knew that he, as well as I, was lost. His ears quivered sensitively, in waiting for the word of command I could not give; he stood alert for the guiding touch of the rein which should reassure him—but, poor little fellow! his complaisance was all in vain. I was incapable of any direction.

But we went on—hunting in vain for the shadow of a foot-path in the forest. I am inclined to think there are many, but we did not cross them. The heat bore on us heavily. I was feverish for water, but, after we crossed that creek, found none. I seemed unreason-

ably thirsty. Perhaps it was the effect of the malarious atmosphere, but I seemed in a raging fever. I grew sick in the saddle. Spells of blindness came over me, and, as we went on, the ceaseless rustle of the bushes wore upon my nerves frightfully. I read once of a poor missionary who was tortured to death by the savages—his head imprisoned in a brass kettle, upon which they beat until he became delirious, and finally, thoroughly crazed and mad. At a certain stage of his misery he could not have suffered more than I did.

The situation was breathless and suffocating, but, at last, as the sun began sinking towards what I knew to be the west, a little breeze sprang up and relieved me—and to my intense refreshment, the platoons of bushes suddenly ceased, and left the spaces between the trees open. Suddenly, as we emerged from a little thicket of plum trees, we came upon a small glade, within which started up five men! My pony, as startled as I, reared upon his haunches.

They were hunters, a little party from Atchison, probably, but I was mistrustful. I did not feel safe; I was keenly on my guard—and though I drew in and soothed my distrustful horse quietly enough, my woman's heart was beating, the veriest coward, under my boyish riding-jacket. Should I tell them that I was lost? They were evidently astonished by my appearance.

"Which is the best road to Atchison?" said I.

"There is but one!" answered one of them.

"Well, where is it?"

"Just take this little path," pointing across the opening, "and follow it about a quarter of a mile, and it will take you into the road."

"Thank you," said I, promptly following these directions, and riding, without further comment, past their camp-fire, into the woods again, glad to get under their cover.

But Mouse was tired; he lagged, and I was not disposed to urge him; I did not feel equal to any more hard riding. The result was, that when I emerged upon the road, it was the purplest of twilights, and I did not know which direction to take. I rode up and down for a little way and saw no sign of a habitation, and again I demurred.

Mouse twisted his neck to look at me, as I wondered what I had better do. I might find my way back to those men, and throwing myself upon their protection, be as safe as was

little Sylvia Yule or Ellen Clitheroe, under somewhat similar circumstances, but, though I wished I had done that in the first place, I was not inclined to go back to them, and I at length determined on the long-revolved plan of spending the night just where I was. I turned back under the trees. And when I had made a pillow of the saddle, which I unstrapped from the pony, and a bed of the blanket, I tied the halter to my wrist, that I might not lose my one companion, and lay down, very tired indeed. Mouse smelled of my dress and of my arm, and finally peered into my face as he stood over me, and made me laugh.

"It's all right, my pet," I said. "We're camping out, Mouse."

The next moment there was a thud, a long sigh, and Mouse lay beside me. I moved my pillow a little nearer to his warm, healthy shoulder and went to sleep.

He awoke me in the night by getting up to graze. I did not feel afraid that he would stray away from me then, and untied the halter from my wrist. For the next three or four hours to daylight he remained within ten or twelve yards of me. I was not chilly as I expected to be, for I was sick with fever, unconsciously, and the damp wind was refreshing. I lay there thinking of the past, and the future, and of the place that I was in. How fast civilization was coming to that lonely spot. What would occur there in the centuries to come? Human histories have marked all New England, so that all the old trees know heart-secrets, and the wildest flowers are hearth-stone words; but as yet there are none but savage records of the Missouri and Kansas woods—fiendish plots have been made there, men have been hung there, women and children, hunted to the last gasp, have perish-

ed there; but no lovers have walked, no little children have hunted wild blooms, no student has received hints of the highest divinity—in the forests of the Missouri border.

The sun rose, and as I was preparing my line of action, a strange welcome sound arose—the congregational singing of a hymn:

"Shall we gather at the river,
Where bright angel feet have trod,
With its crystal tide forever
Flowing by the throne of God?"

"Ere we reach the smiling river,
Lay we every burden down,
Grace our spirits will deliver,
And provide a robe and crown!

"At the smiling of the river,
Mirror of the Saviour's face,
Saints, whom death will never sever,
Lift their songs of saving grace!

"Yes, we will gather at the river,
The beautiful, beautiful river,
Gather, with the saints, at the river
That flows by the throne of God.

"Soon we'll reach the silver river,
Soon our pilgrimage will cease,
Soon our happy hearts will quiver
With the melody of peace!"

I knew the singing came from the vicinity of the river, and I guessed rightly that the Baptists, those pioneer religionists, were performing the rites of baptism upon its banks. It was Sunday morning. Thus I found my way to the water, and to the boat in waiting.

An hour later Mouse welcomed the sight of home with a joyful whinny. Gruff the hound, came down to the gate to escort us up the drive. He cocked one eye at me sagaciously, well knowing, I think, by experience, the externals of a rough time.